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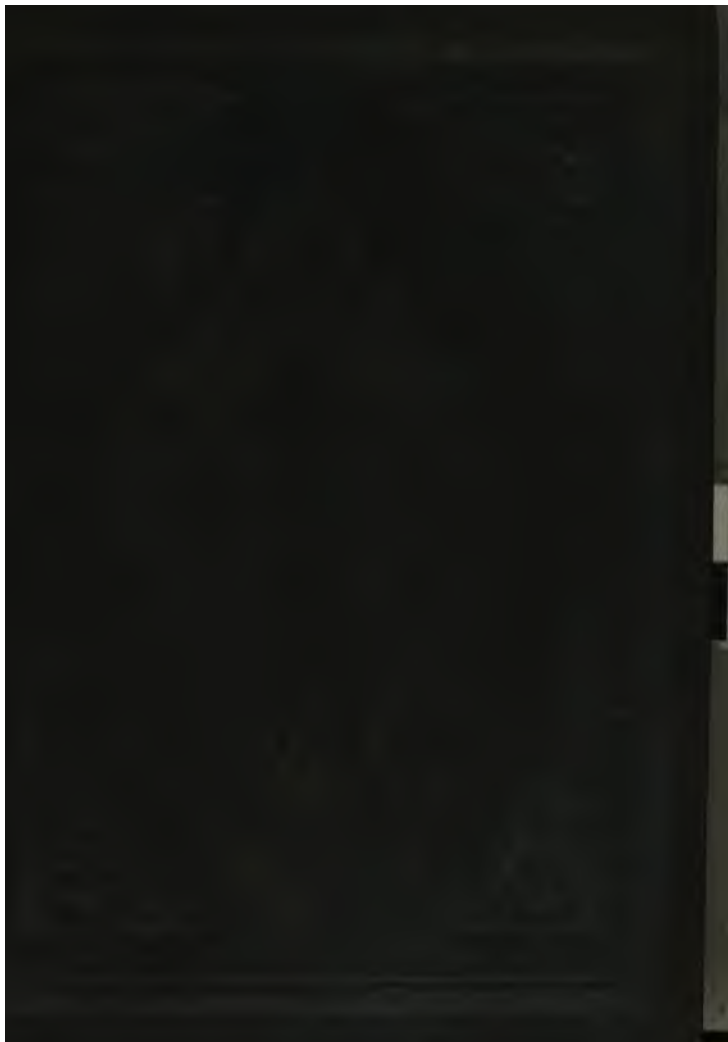
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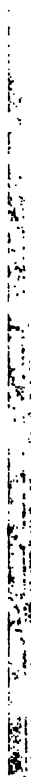
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*Samuel, the child was wean'd and brought  
To wait upon the Lord,  
Young Timothy betimes was taught  
To know his holy word.*



# SCRIPTURE HISTORY;

WITH

THE LIVES OF THE APOSTLES,

&c.

BY E. MILLER.

DESIGNED FOR THE IMPROVEMENT OF YOUTH.

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**THE ORIGINAL EDITION,**  
ENLARGED AND IMPROVED.

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ILLUSTRATED BY UPWARDS OF TWO HUNDRED AND FORTY ENGRAVINGS,  
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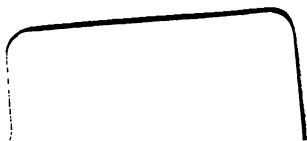
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PRINTED FOR T. KELLY, 17, PATERNOSTER ROW.

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M.DCCC.XLVIII.

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THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO



## LIVES OF SUNDRY APOSTLES.

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### DIRECTION TO BINDER.

**VOL. I.**—To consist of the Old Testament:—

“Adam naming the Creation,” as Frontispiece, to face the Vignette; the printed Title-page, with Index, to follow; the plates throughout are numbered to face the respective pages of letter-press.

**VOL. II.**—To consist of the New Testament:—

“Suffer little Children to come unto Me,” as Frontispiece, to face the Vignette, “Samuel at Prayer;” the printed Title-page, with Index, to follow; the other plates are numbered to face the respective pages of letter-press.

**\*\*** Those who desire to bind the Work in Four Vols., which is recommended for the convenience of juvenile reading, divide as follow:—

**Vol. 1.**—Old Testament, page 1 to 252.

**Vol. 2.**—Old Testament, page 253 to 512.

**Vol. 3.**—New Testament, page 1 to 224.

**Vol. 4.**—*New Testament*, page 225 to the end.





## GENEALOGY OF JESUS CHRIST.

From thence a wonderful Son shall soon proceed,  
 Jesus his Sacred name by heaven decreed;  
 Whose mighty arm shall set his people free  
 From sin and hell's ignoble slavery.

MANY very useful books of history have been written relative to the kingdom of the earth, and the lives of great men who have flourished from time to time in the world; and the reading of them may please and inform the mind; but what are the best of them when compared with the important instruction contained in the everlasting gospel of our blessed Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ? the study and true knowledge of which concern us more than all human productions in the world; it is ever new, and equally good news, from one generation to another to the end of time.

*“The book of the generations of Jesus*

*Christ.*" He was from the beginning in his Father's view, for the salvation of *all believers* in all those preceding ages, as if he had already lived, and died, and rose again—" *The Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.*" Jesus is called Christ. Jesus means Saviour, and Christ means the Anointed; the same with the Hebrew name, Messiah. He is called Messiah the Prince (Daniel ix. 25), and God's Anointed (Psalm ii. 2.) Under this character he was long expected by the Jews: "*Art thou the Christ, the Anointed One?*"

Christ being appointed to, and fully qualified for all these offices, is therefore called the Anointed—" *anointed with the oil of gladness above his fellows*" (Psalm xlv. 7); and from this name, which is as ointment poured forth, all his followers, to this day, are *called Christians.*

My young friends, may you and I ever rejoice, as Christians, in the name of Christ our Saviour; and may all that name the name of Christ depart from iniquity; and I would intreat of you never to forget, as declared in Scripture, (Acts iv. 12.) that *“there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved,”* but that of Jesus Christ.

A brief summary of this genealogy is given us in Matthew i. 17. *“All the generations from Abraham to David are fourteen generations; and from David to the carrying away into Babylon are fourteen generations; and from the carrying away into Babylon unto Christ are fourteen generations.”* It is here summed up in three remarkable periods. In the first, we have the family of David rising, and looking forth as the morning; in the second, we have it flow-

rishing in its meridian lustre; in the third, we have it declining into the family of a poor carpenter: then Christ shines forth out of it, "*The glory of his people Israel.*" (Luke ii. 32.)

So important is the character of the Saviour in every view, such a Divine splendour is cast around it, that our minds should be filled with profound reverence when we draw near to contemplate it. In the study of every part of the Holy Scriptures, there is continual need of prayer that we may possess a right understanding of their spiritual meaning. And especially here, when the Lord himself comes down from heaven and passes by before us, we should beg that He who commanded the light to shine out of darkness may shine into our hearts, "*to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God, in the face of Jesus Christ.*" (2 Corinthians iv. 6.)







*While Zacharias, in his turn,  
Attends to make the incense burn;  
The cloud arose, and on the right  
An heavenly form appear'd in sight.*

## BIRTH OF JOHN THE BAPTIST.

To aged Elizabeth is given  
A child, so wills benignant Heaven ;  
The harbinger of Him above  
Precedes the God of life and love.

THE Almighty had been pleased by the prophet Malachi, to foretell the ministry of John the Baptist, as the messenger who should go before the Saviour's face, to prepare the way for him (Malachi iii. 1); and in Luke chap. i. we have an account of the birth of this harbinger of Jesus Christ.

John the Baptist's father, Zacharias, was a priest, and served God in the temple; and his mother Elizabeth was a pious woman, and walked with her husband in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord, blameless. Happy are they who through Divine grace are enabled to imitate such examples. But, like many of the Lord's *people, they were denied that blessing which*

in those days was thought so highly of; they had no child, and were now advancing in years; yet, as was said to Abraham, "*Is any thing too hard for the Lord?*" (Genesis xviii. 14) so now a fresh proof was given, that "*with God all things are possible,*" (Mark x. 27) for a son was promised them in their old age.

While Zacharias was burning incense in the temple, an angel of the Lord appeared unto him, the sight of whom greatly alarmed him; but he came with pleasing tidings, for he informed Zacharias that his wife should bear him a son, and that he should be called John; that he should be set apart to the Lord, be filled with the Holy Ghost, even from his nativity; by which was meant, that he should be very early inspired to teach the doctrines and precepts of true religion; and *that he should have the honour of going*

before the face of Christ, as his messenger,  
*"to turn the disobedient to the wisdom of the  
 just; to make ready a people prepared for  
 the Lord,"* (Luke i. 17)

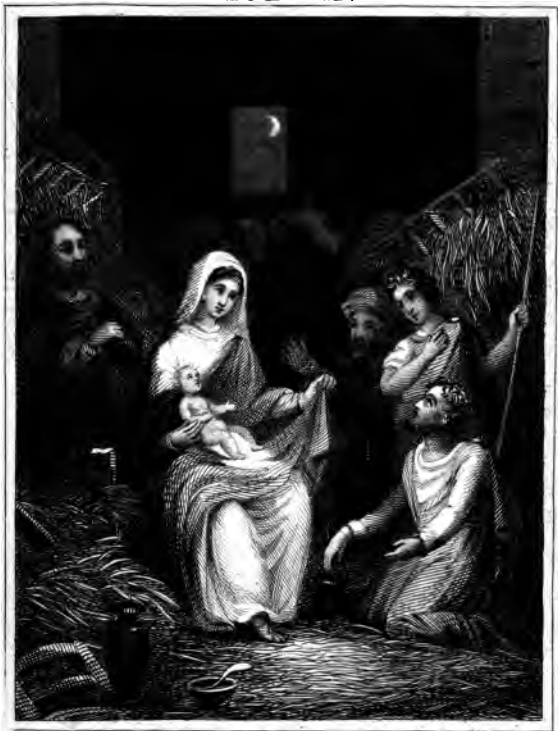
Zacharias, though so good a man, seems to have been hard of belief on this occasion; for when the angel had delivered his message, instead of acknowledging with gratitude and wonder the gracious tidings, he questioned the word, by asking how he should know this, seeing both his wife and himself were aged; to which the angel replied, *"I am Gabriel, that stand in the presence of God, and am sent to tell thee these things; and behold, thou shalt be dumb until these things be performed, because thou believest not my words, which shall be fulfilled in their season."* (Luke i, 19, 20.) And so it was, for when the child was born, and the neighbours and friends would have called him Zacharias,

the father wrote that his name was to be John; after which his tongue was unloosed. John was devoted to God from his birth, and the Lord was with him.

Blessed indeed and happy are those dear children who are early devoted to the service of God. The Lord is well pleased when the young seek and obey him; and such may be assured, that he will be their Father and their Guide in this life, and admit them to eternal happiness in the world to come; therefore, dear children, “*Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth. Fear God, and keep his commandments.*” (Ecclesiastes xii. 1, 13.)



9  
LUKE II.



*See the kinder shepherds round him,  
Telling wonders from the sky !  
In the manger: there they found him,  
With his virgin mother by.*

## THE BIRTH OF CHRIST.

A Deity appears on earth,  
And choirs of angels hail his birth—  
“Glory,” they cry to God in Heaven,  
“And peace and love to man be given!”

THE glorious period now approached, when the great Redeemer of mankind was to appear in this lower world; and we find in the first chapter of Luke, that the angel Gabriel was sent from God to the Virgin Mary, with the joyful news that she should be privileged to be the mother of the promised Messiah. The angel addressed himself to the Virgin thus: “*Hail thou that art highly favoured, the Lord is with thee : blessed art thou among women. And she was troubled at his saying. And the angel said unto her, Fear not, Mary, for thou hast found favour with God. And behold, thou shalt conceive, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name Jesus ; he shall be*



*great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest," &c.*

It was foretold by the prophet Micah, (chap. v. 2.) "*That out of Bethlehem should come forth that Person who should be ruler in Israel.*" and we see this fulfilled; for Cæsar Augustus, the emperor of Rome, having at this time issued a decree, that all the Roman empire, and Judea as a tributary province, should be taxed, Joseph went with Mary, his espoused wife, to Bethlehem, to be taxed, where she was delivered of her first-born son, and called his name Jesus. (Matthew i. 25.) There was no room for Mary or Joseph in any inn, or house of entertainment; Jesus was therefore born in a stable, and laid in a manger, which bespeaks that his parents were poor, or we may suppose room would have been found elsewhere; *and it also shows the condescension of the*

Lord God our Saviour, that he should not only humble himself to visit our earth, but also come in such circumstances. Well may we say with St. Paul, "*Though he was rich, yet for our sakes he became poor, that we through his poverty might be rich.*" (2 Corinthians viii. 9.)

The blessed intelligence of the Saviour's birth was conveyed to some shepherds, who were abiding in the fields, keeping watch over their flocks by night; to whom the angel of the Lord appeared, and gave this salutation: "*Fear not: for behold I bring you glad tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people; for unto you is born this day in the city of David, a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord. And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God, and saying, Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good-*

*will toward men.*" (Luke ii. 10, 11, 13, 14.)

These words are a rejoicing acclamation, which strongly represents the piety and benevolence of these heavenly spirits, and their affectionate good wishes for the prosperity of the Messiah's kingdom, and the redemption of mankind.

Never was a sweeter song, and never was there greater cause to praise Almighty God, for his unbounded love to ruined men. But why did angels sing? because they rejoice over the salvation of sinners; and if they had reason to sing, how much greater cause have we, for whom Christ was sent, by whom peace is restored betwixt God and man, and his good-will procured for those who deserved his wrath and indignation!





*A radiant Star, whose kind and friendly beams  
Against Judea dart their golden streams,  
Three eastern Magi from their country brings  
Wise men they were, or at least, were kings.*

## THE WISE MEN FROM THE EAST.

Their royal presents in their hands behold,  
The sun's rich birth, myrrh, frankincense, and gold;  
With these the monarch of both worlds they meet,  
These and themselves they prostrate at his feet.

HEROD was an Edomite, and was made king of Judea by the rulers of the Roman state. Christ was born in his reign. We read in Mathew ii. 1, 2, "*There came wise men from the east to Jerusalem, saying, Where is he that is born King of the Jews? for we have seen his star in the east, and are come to worship him.*" These wise men are called *Magi*, or *Magicians*. The Jews regarded not Christ, but these Gentiles sought him. They found out Christ by the same star they had seen in their own country. By the first appearance of the star, they were given to understand where they might inquire for this King; then it disappeared. They traced the matter as far as they could.

they were upon their journey to Bethlehem, but how shall they find him when they come thither? Here they were at a loss, when behold, the star which they saw in the east, appeared again, and went before them. Now they saw they were not deceived, and had not taken this long journey in vain. God was with them, and the tokens of his presence and favour cannot but fill the souls of those who know how to value them, with joy unspeakable.

They found a cottage was his palace, and his own poor mother all the retinue he had! Is this the Saviour of the world? Is this the King of the Jews; nay, and the Prince of the kings of the earth? Yes, this is he, who, though he was rich, yet, for our sakes, became thus poor. However, these wise men did not think themselves baffled in their inquiry; but, as having found the King they

sought, they presented themselves first, and then their gifts to him. Every indication of obtaining an interest in Christ, will give sincere joy to the humble inquirer, who will not be surprised at finding Him and his disciples in obscure cottages, after having in vain sought them in palaces and populous cities.

They fell down and worshipped him. To this babe they gave honour, not only as to a King, but as to a God. All that have truly found Christ, fall down before him; they adore him, and submit themselves to him. It will be the wisdom of the wisest of the children of men, and by this it will appear that they know Christ, if they are the humble, faithful worshippers of the Lord Jesus.

In the eastern nations, the custom was, when they did homage to their kings, they made presents. The gifts the wise men pre-



sented, were *gold, frankincense, and myrrh*. Thus a kind providence sent a very seasonable relief to Joseph and Mary, in their present poor condition. Our heavenly Father knoweth what his children need, and employs some as stewards to supply the wants of others; and can provide for them, even from the end of the earth. Above all, let us remember, that if we do not come to Christ with earnestness of heart, and honour and worship his holy name as our Lord and Saviour, now he is on his throne of glory, these wise men, who sought him while an infant in his mother's arms, will rise up against us in the day of judgment. **LORD,** *make us wise unto salvation!*





*Then rise and flee, to Egypt flee, with speed;  
The means by Heaven, as well as end, decreed:  
There, till the tyrant's death, a refuge choose;  
Not long before I bring the welcome news.*

## THE FLIGHT INTO EGYPT.

He rose, he fled, he bore his charge away,  
And robb'd the murderous king of his expected prey

AFTER the wise men had seen the child and departed, "*The angel of the Lord appeareth to Joseph in a dream, saying, Arise, and take the young child and his mother, and flee into Egypt, and be thou there until I bring thee word: for Herod will seek the young child to destroy him. And when he arose, he took the young child and his mother by night, and departed into Egypt.*" (Matthew ii. 13, 14.) God thus graciously prevented the mischief the wicked king Herod designed to the child Jesus, and the trouble it would have been to the wise men to have been accessory to it. They were warned of God not to return to Herod, nor

to Jerusalem. They departed into their own country another way, to bring the good tidings to their countrymen, which would be a further preparation for preaching the Gospel in those regions. Joseph knew neither the danger the child was in, nor how to escape it ; but the Almighty, by an angel, informs him, and directed him what to do. "*Take the young child, and flee into Egypt.*" He that came to die for us, when his hour was not yet come fled for his own safety !

Egypt was infamous for idolatry, tyranny, and enmity to the people of God : it had been a house of bondage to Israel, and particularly cruel to the infants of Israel ; yet it is appointed to be a place of refuge to the holy child Jesus ! God, when he pleases, can make the worst of places serve the best of purposes. This may be considered as a

trial of the faith of Joseph and Mary. But their faith, being tried, was found firm, and they believe this is the Son of God, though they see no miracle wrought for his preservation, but they are put to the use of ordinary means ; and now it appeared how well God had provided for the young child and his mother, in appointing Joseph to stand in so near a relation to them ; now the gold which the wise men had brought would bear their charges. God intimates the continuance of his care and guidance. Thus God will keep his people still in dependence upon him. If we and our infants are at any time in difficulty, let us remember the danger Christ in his infancy was brought into.

Joseph immediately arose, and went away by night, the same night, as it should seem, that he received the orders. An abun-

dance encumbers a necessary flight. If rich people have the advantage of the poor while they possess what they have, the poor have the advantage of the rich when called suddenly to part with it. In this exile they remained till the death of Herod. It is no new thing for God's people to be in Egypt, in a strange land, in a house of bondage; but they shall be brought out. They may be hid in Egypt, but they shall not be left there.

Egypt may serve to sojourn in, or take shelter in, for a while, but not to abide in. Christ was sent to the lost sheep of the house of Israel,—to them he must return. *“For thus saith the Lord GOD; I will both search my sheep, and seek them out; and I will bring them to their own land, and feed them in a good pasture upon the mountains of Israel.”* (Ezekiel xxxiv. 11, 14.)







*Now cruel Herod had decreed  
That all the infant race should bleed,  
Which under two years old were found  
In Bethlehem and country round.*

## HEROD SLAYETH THE CHILDREN.

Maternal shrieks, and dying groans  
Of infants, Bethlehem now bemoans ;  
Herod sends forth each murderous hand,  
And havock lord's it o'er the land.

THE wise men had promised Herod to return and inform him of all the particulars relative to the new-born prince, as no doubt his birth caused him much anxiety and trouble, fearing that he would become a rival to him in the throne, it having been prophesied that the expected Messiah should extinguish all other kingdoms. The jealousy and disappointment of Herod worked him up into rage, and he determined to make sure of the destruction of his fancied rival.

The inspired penman relates the following account of this most barbarous and cruel transaction. "*Then Herod, when he*

*saw that he was mocked of the wise men, was exceeding wroth, and sent forth and slew all the children that were in Bethlehem, and in all the coasts thereof, from two years old and under, according to the time he had diligently inquired of the wise men. Then was fulfilled that which was spoken by Jeremy the prophet, saying, In Rama was there a voice heard lamentation, and weeping, and great mourning, Rachel weeping for her children, and would not be comforted, because they are not.” (Matthew ii. 16, 17, 18.)*

Imagination can hardly conceive, still less can the pen describe, the horrors of such a scene ; but the history of Herod, his cruel deeds, and still more cruel purposes, show that there was nothing too vile for this wretched man to perpetrate.

In a few months after Herod had murdered the innocents, his wickedness and

atrocious cruelties were visited by a most painful and loathsome disease, which terminated in his wretched and miserable death.

After the end of this cruel tyrant, "*behold, an angel of the Lord appeareth in a dream to Joseph in Egypt, saying, Arise, and take the young child and his mother, and go into the land of Israel ; for they are dead which sought the young child's life. And he arose, and took the young child and his mother, and came into the land of Israel.*" (ver. 19, 20, 21.)

God had graciously sent Joseph into Egypt for shelter, and there he remained till the same Almighty was pleased to order him thence. Could we but look upon this world as our Egypt, the place of our bondage, and to heaven as our only Canaan, our home, and our eternal rest, we should

readily arise, and depart thither when we are called for, as Joseph did out of Egypt. Joseph had further instructions from God where to fix his abode in the land of Israel. These directions Joseph received in a dream, probably as before, by the ministration of an angel. Truly we may say, what a succession of enemies there has been, and we fear is still, raised up against our LORD and SAVIOUR and his *church*! For this reason, Joseph was not to take the young child into Judea; but they turned aside into the parts of Galilee, and came and dwelt in a city called Nazareth. There they continued, and from thence our Saviour was called *Jesus of Nazareth*, which was to the Jews a stumbling-block; "*that it might be fulfilled, which was spoken by the prophets, He shall be called a Nazarene.*" (Matthew ii. 23.)

!



*Through Judah's fertile wild the Baptist came,  
And the Messiah's kingdom did proclaim;  
He comes, he comes, prepare aloud he cry'd,  
Fill every vale, low'r every mountain's pride.*

## OF JOHN.

When, his to d.  
Flood,  
And, he stood,

Baptism of John  
The gospel day.  
Gloom of heaven is  
Of one crying in  
Ye the way of the  
Night." (Matthew

Malachi there was  
The Baptist came, to  
More directly than  
Ancient prophets had  
Lest in the wilderness  
Not an uninhabited  
Country not thickly  
And their villages



In these John preached, there he had hitherto lived, being born near, in Hebron. No place is so remote as to shut us out from the visits of Divine grace; nay, commonly the sweetest intercourse the saints have with Heaven, is when they are withdrawn farthest from the noise of this world.

His meat was locusts and wild honey; these he mostly fed upon. Wild honey was found in the hollows of trees and rocks, where bees built. Those whose business it is to call others to mourn for sin, and to mortify it, ought themselves to live a serious life, a life of self-denial and circumspection. By giving others this example, he made way for Christ. A conviction of the vanity of the world, and every thing in it, is the best preparation for the entertainment of the kingdom of heaven in the heart. "*Blessed are the poor in spirit.*" John

had spent his youth in such exercises of the soul as were calculated to prepare him for his great work.

He came preaching. The doctrine he preached was that of repentance ; “ *Repent ye.*” The word here used, implies a total revolution in the mind, a change in the judgment, disposition, and affections, another and a better bias to the soul. John Baptist’s business was to call men to repent of their sins. Consider your ways, change your minds ; you have thought amiss ; think again, and think aright. True penitents have other thoughts of God and Christ, sin and holiness, of this world and the other, than they had. Those who are truly sorry for what they have done amiss, will be careful to do so no more. This repentance is a necessary duty, in obedience to the command of God (Acts xvii. 30), and necessary

for the comforts of the gospel of Christ. If the heart of man had continued upright and unstained, Divine consolations might have been received without this ; but being sinful, the sore must be searched, or it cannot be cured.

True repentance is seated in the heart. But in vain do we pretend to have it there, if we do not bring forth the fruits of it, by forsaking all sin, and cleaving to that which is good. They are not worthy the name of penitents, or their privileges, who say they are sorry for their sins, and yet persist in them. True penitents are humble in their own eyes, thankful for the least mercy, patient under affliction, and watchful against all appearances of evil, abounding in every duty, and charitable in judging others.





*Simeon in his glad arms the child he takes  
With tears of joy, and thus his silence breaks:  
Lord! let thy servant now in peace depart,  
Whose aged eyes have seen what joys his heart.*

## CHRIST PRESENTED.

For the universal globe prepar'd,  
To be alike by all the faithful shar'd;  
A light to gentiles, who in darkness dwell,  
The glory and the pride of thy lov'd Israel.

*“ SIMEON took him up in his arms, and blessed God, and said, Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word: for mine eyes have seen thy salvation; which thou hast prepared before the face of all people; a light to lighten the Gentiles; and the glory of thy people Israel.’*  
(Luke ii. 28, &c.)

Simeon dwelt in Jerusalem, and was eminent for his piety and communion with God. He waited for the consolation of Israel; that is, for the coming of the Messiah, in whom alone the nation of Israel would find consolation. He was long in coming, and those who believed he would come, continued wait-

ing and hoping for it. The Holy Ghost was upon Simeon, not only as a Spirit of holiness, but as a Spirit of prophecy. He was searching what manner of time the Spirit of Christ in the Old Testament prophets did signify, and whether it were not now at hand ; and he received this oracle, that he should not see death before he had seen the Messiah, the Lord's Anointed. Those, and those only, can look death in the face without terror, who have had a sight of Jesus Christ by faith.

When Christ was presented, Simeon came, by direction of the Spirit, into the temple. The same Spirit that had provided for the support of his hope, now provided for his joy. Simeon "*took him up in his arms.*" He was promised that he should see Christ, but more is done—he has him in his arms ! Hereupon, he blessed God, and said, "*Lord,*

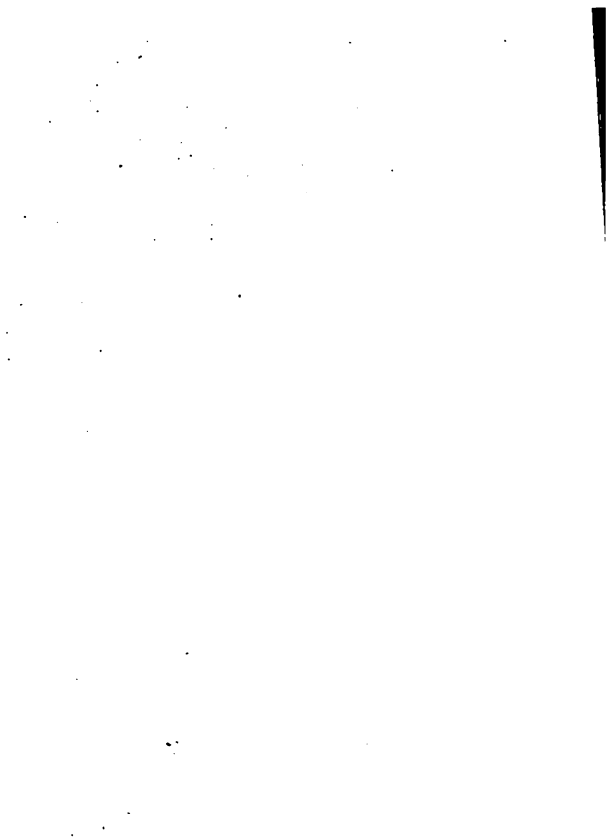
*now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace."*

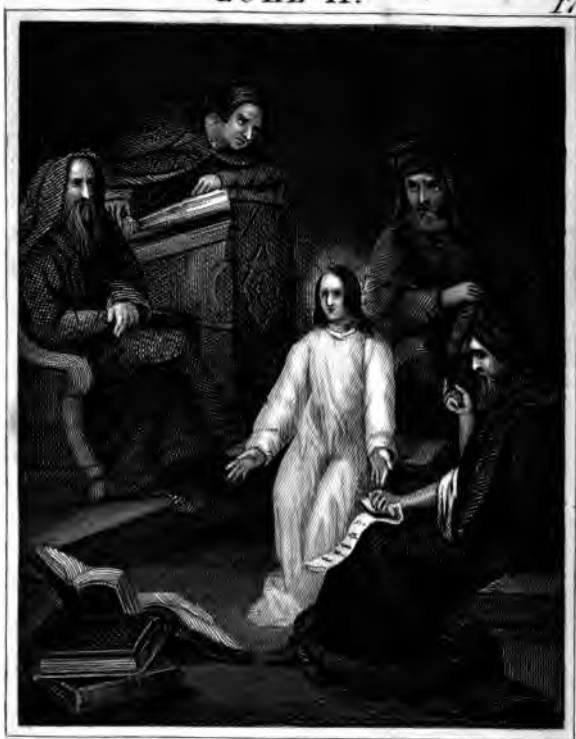
Simeon had a pleasant prospect concerning himself, and rose above the love of life, and fear of death. He blessed God that he saw that salvation in his arms, which many prophets and kings desired to see, and could not. Here is a confession of his faith, that this Child in his arms was the Saviour, the salvation itself, the salvation of God's appointing. It is a farewell to this world. 'Now mine eyes have been blessed with this sight, let them see no more in this world.' How poor does this world appear to one that hath Christ in his heart, and salvation in his view ! It is a welcome to death ; "*Now let thy servant depart.*" Death is the soul's departure out of the body, from the world of sense to the world of spirits. We must not depart till God gives us our discharge, for



we are his servants, and must not quit his service till his own appointed time.

O how comfortable is the death of a good man! He departs as God's servant from the place of his toil, to that of his eternal rest. He departs in peace; peace with God, peace with his own conscience, in peace with death. What is the ground of this comfort? "*For mine eyes have seen thy salvation.*" This shows a believing expectation of a happy state after death, through this salvation he now had a sight of; which not only takes away the terror of death, but makes it a real gain to all true believers. "*Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord; Yea, saith the Spirit; that they may rest from their labours.*" (Revelation xiv. 13.)





*His parents sought him full three days;  
And there amongst the wise, with praise  
He's found: dwelling on themes profound  
Within the temple's holy ground.*

**CHRIST WITH THE DOCTORS.**

The child Divine the temple seeks,  
And 'midst its sages wisely speaks ;  
As if by God-like wisdom fired,  
And by Omnipotence inspired.

**AFTER** the death of the cruel Herod, Joseph and Mary, the parents of Christ, by direction of an angel who appeared to Joseph in a dream, removed from Egypt to Nazareth; and there they regularly went up to the temple at Jerusalem to worship at the feast of the passover, and on such occasions Jesus went with them. It was some distance from Nazareth, where this holy family dwelt, to Jerusalem, and yet they constantly resorted thither, according to the commandment of God. It is a blessed thing to have a love to the house of the Lord, and to desire to be found there seeking after salvation, which God is pleased to dispense in his courts to

those that wait upon him ; hear what David says in Psalm lxxxiv. *“How amiable are thy tabernacles, O Lord of hosts ! my soul longeth, yea, even fainteth for the courts of the Lord ; my heart and my flesh crieth out for the living God.”* Jesus accompanied his parents to the place of worship. Public ordinances must be attended, and we must not forsake *“the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is”* Worldly business ought, in the view of every sincere Christian, to give way to the honour and service of Almighty God, our heavenly Father.

It is a pleasing sight to see children waiting in God’s house for his blessing ; and there can be no doubt that God is pleased therewith ; for in his holy word he has said that *“those that seek me early shall find me.”* (Proverbs viii. 17.)

When the usual time of attending the

passover at Jerusalem had expired, Joseph and Mary set out to return to Nazareth, not knowing but Jesus was in the company; but travelling a day's journey, they missed him; and returned to Jerusalem to seek him; where, after three days, *"they found him in the temple, sitting in the midst of the doctors, both hearing them, and asking them questions. And all that heard him were astonished at his understanding and answers."* (Luke ii. 46, 47.) Christ was now only twelve years of age.

Here again, Christ is an example to the young, to be diligent in acquiring useful knowledge; the way to learn is to inquire, to seek it of those who are able to teach, and to love the company of the good and wise. When Mary gently reproved Jesus for thus causing sorrow, he replied, *"Wist ye not*

*that I must be about my Father's business ?"*  
(Luke ii. 49.)

Happy are they who are employed in the service of God, their heavenly Father, and who rejoice to do his work and will. But we read that Jesus returned to Nazareth with his parents, where he was subject to them, and increased in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man. Thus, my dear children, you must be obedient to your parents, honour your father and mother; this is the way to be happy and prosperous. If Jesus was obedient, how will you excuse yourself if you are not so? And by God's grace may you grow in wisdom and in his favour, and thus enjoy peace and happiness in this world, and indulge a well-grounded hope of salvation in that which is to come.







*In Jordan's tide the Baptist stands,  
Performs the rite, which Christ demands,  
And lo! from yonder opening skies,  
The heavenly dove on Jesus flies.*

## THE BAPTISM OF JESUS

While Christ to baptism attends,  
 The Holy Ghost from Heaven descends;  
 And John the first attests abroad,  
 That Jesus is the Son of God.

*THEN cometh Jesus from Galilee to Jordan, unto John, to be baptized of him.*  
 (Matthew iii. 13.)

This was a striking instance of Christ's great humility, that he should offer himself to be baptized by John, that he who knew no sin, should submit to the baptism of repentance. "*John forbade him.*" John had now obtained a great name, and was universally respected; yet he was humble still. John thought it necessary that he should be baptised of Christ "*I have need to be baptized of thee, and comest thou to me?*" (ver. 14.) Though John was filled with the Holy Ghost from his birth, (Luke i. 15.)

et he confessed he had need to be baptized; though he was the greatest that was ever born, yet he was as other decendants of Adam, and owned he had need of cleansing.

Our Lord's answer to John is full and expressive; "*Suffer it to be so now, for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness.*" (ver. 13.) This remonstance removed the objection of John, and he then baptized the blessed Jesus in the river Jordan, in the presence of numerous spectators.

Our Lord Jesus looked upon it as well becoming him to fulfil all righteousness, to own every Divine institution, and to show his readiness to comply with God's holy precepts. He thus justifies and approves of the wisdom of God, in sending John to prepare his way by the baptism of repentance: and thus recommends the gospel ordinance of baptism to his church and all his followers.

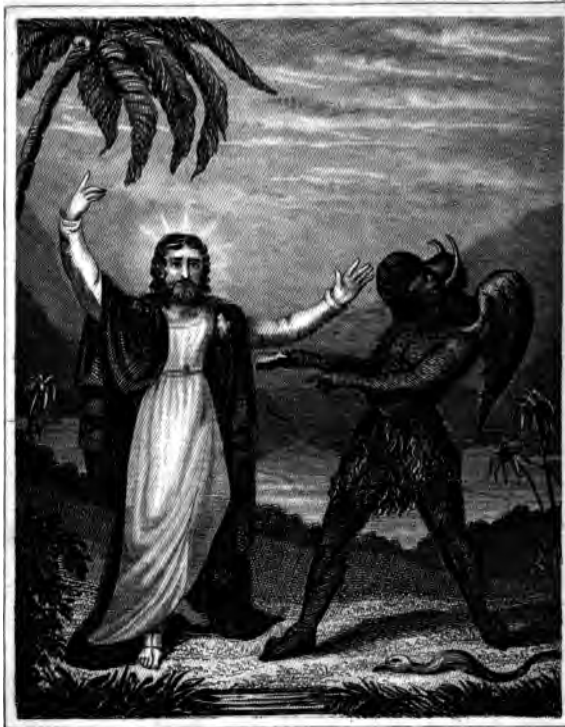
The baptism of Christ was graced with a special display of glory. *“And Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the water : and, lo, the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon him. And, lo, a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.”* (ver. 16, 17.) In this declaration of God, consists all the comfort of a Christian, No one can please, or be accepted without him. In him, our spiritual sacrifices are acceptable, for he is the altar that sanctifies every gift. (1 Peter ii. 5.) Out of Christ, He is a consuming fire; but in Christ, a reconciled Father.

Christ was to be the Head of the church; and the Spirit descended upon him, by him to be imparted to all believers, in his gifts, graces, and comforts.

This descent of the Spirit upon Christ, showed that he was endued with his sacred influences without measure. The Spirit of Christ resembles the gentle dove. *The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance:* by abounding in these we glorify God, to whose service we were devoted, when we were *baptized in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.*

May we have grace to believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God—the Saviour of the world; and if the Almighty Creator was well pleased with him, may we be well pleased and thankful “*above all things for his inestimable love in the redemption of us and the whole world by our Lord Jesus Christ, for the means of grace, and for the hope of glory.*”





*Art thou the Son of God indeed !  
And of provisions stand in need !  
Then change at once these stones to bread ,  
And let both thee and I be fed .*

## JESUS TEMPTED OF THE DEVIL.

The tempter of mankind in vain  
 Tryed his aim with Christ to gain,  
 Spurn'd and repuls'd at last he flies,  
 And minist'ring angels Heaven supplies.

THE temptation of our Saviour by the devil, as narrated by the Evangelist, has in it much that is striking, and to poor tempted sinners great encouragement. After Jesus had been baptized by John, he was led into the wilderness by the Spirit of God, where for forty days and nights he fasted; at the end of which time being hungry, Satan came to him, and said, "*If thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread,*" (Matthew iv. 3.) In reply to which, Christ told him that "*Man doth not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.*" (ver. 4.) After this the devil took him up into the



holy city of Jerusalem, and "*setteth him on a pinnacle of the temple,*" from whence he tempted him to cast himself down, because God had promised in his word to protect his people in danger; but the Saviour gave him to know that we are not to tempt God by any presumptuous acts of our own. Satan made yet one more effort to overcome Christ; for he took him up into an exceeding high mountain, and showed him all the kingdoms of the world, and promised them all to him, if he would fall down and worship him. To this bold temptation Christ gave him a reply, that compelled him to depart; he said, "*Get thee hence, Satan; for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve. Then the devil leaveth him, and, behold, angels came and ministered to him.*" (ver. 10, 11.)

Such are the outlines of Christ's tempta-

tions in the wilderness; which are also stated, with some trifling variation, in Mark i. Now what are we to learn from this account, and what benefit may we gain from it? If Christ was thus tempted, we cannot expect to escape the arts and stratagems of our great adversary, who, "*as a roaring lion, walketh about seeking whom he may devour,*" (1 Peter v. 8.); for if the Master thus suffered, the disciples cannot expect to fare better. When Satan tempted our Saviour, our Lord opposed his suggestions by quoting passages of scripture in opposition; and we cannot fly to any stronger defence than the word of God; for whatever our enemy would urge us to, there is every thing in God's word to lead us to oppose him, and not to listen to is temptations.

But this is not all we are to learn from what Christ endureth; for we are told by

St. Paul in Hebrews ii. 18, that Jesus having "*suffered, being tempted, he is able to succour them that are tempted;*" and in chap. iv. 15, that he is "*touched with the feeling of our infirmities, for he was in all points tempted as we are,*" O what a comfortable reflection is this, that our Redeemer knows all we suffer from Satan; he has himself tasted the bitter cup, and he will give us strength in every time of need. To him may we therefore look with confidence, when the wicked one besets us, pleading what he has done and suffered; and may we at length be "*more than conquerors through Him that loved us.*" (Romans viii. 37.)





*Two fishers on their poor employ intent,  
Equally ignorant and innocent,  
He sees; and beck'ning calls: this Andrew nam'd,  
That Simon, more in sacred story fam'd.*

## PETER, ANDREW, &c. CALLED

Next the two sons of Zebedee he saw  
 On the broad lake, who, struck with sacred awe,  
 And drawn by cords of love at his command,  
 Leap from their bark and print the yielding sand.

WHEN our blessed Saviour began to preach, disciples were speedily gathered; these were first hearers, but soon became preachers of his doctrine; they were first witnesses of his miracles, and afterwards testified concerning them.

We have an account of the call of two sets of brothers, in Matthew iv. 18, 21,—*Peter and Andrew, James and John*; and the two former, probably the latter also, had known Christ before, but were not till now called into close and constant attendance upon him. They were unlearned men, not bred up to books or literature. Christ sometimes chooses to endow those with the gifts

Christ, must be diligent and constant in their attendance on him. There is no learning comparable to that which is gained by following so excellent an example as Christ. Those who are to fish for men, must therein follow Christ, and do it as he did, with diligence, faithfulness, and tenderness. Christ is the great pattern for preachers, and they ought to be workers together with him.

Every Christain who would follow Christ aright, must be ready to part with his interest in this world, rather than with his interest in Jesus Christ; and those who are devoted to the work of the ministry are, in a special manner, required to disentangle themselves from the affairs of common life.

1





*See God's own Son a preacher stands,  
With life and pardon in his hands;  
Hear him the joyful news proclaim!  
For never man could speak like him.*

## CHRIST'S SERMON ON THE MOUNT.

"Behold the Lamb of God," cried John,  
The sins of man who shall atone ;  
While Christ proceeds, the mount ascends,  
And blessing with instruction blends.

IT pleased our blessed Saviour to preach to the multitude that followed him, and his sermon on the mount was not only deserving of their attention, but claims the serious regard of all Christians to the end of time. Indeed, we have great reason to be thankful that so much is recorded for our instruction, of what the Lord himself did when he sojourned on the earth.

This is the longest and most important discourse of Christ that is written for our instruction. He went up into a mountain, to preach his law and doctrine of salvation to his followers ; and in his sermon declares

who are the blessed, in these words: “*Blessed are the poor in spirit—blessed are they that mourn—blessed are the meek—blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness—blessed are the merciful—blessed are the pure in heart—blessed are the peace-makers—blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness’ sake—blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and say all manner of evil against you falsely for my sake : rejoice, and be exceeding glad : for great is your reward in heaven.*” (Matthew, chapter v.)

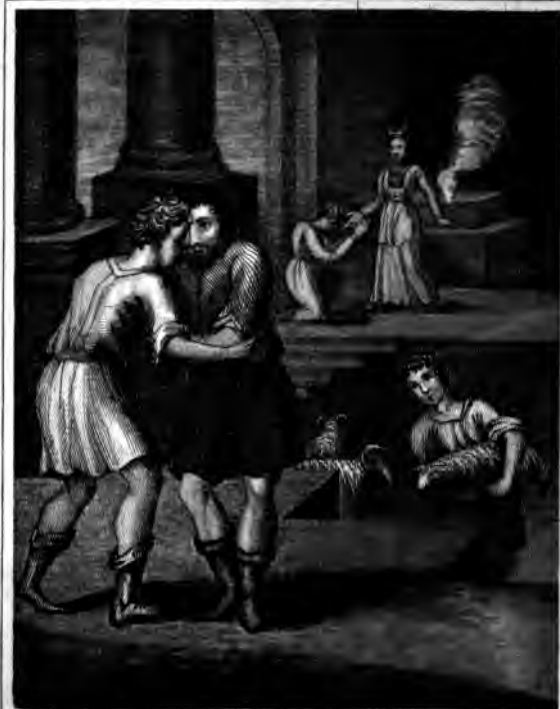
Here we learn who are the characters that are blessed of God, through Jesus Christ; and does it not much concern us to inquire whether we are ourselves described among the happy number? If we are, it is of the grace and goodness of God, and we may rest assured that the blessing pronounced on such

shall be our happy portion. Our Lord Jesus came into the world to bless and to save mankind. Adam, when he fell, entailed a curse on all mankind; and happy will it be for us, as we are all involved in the curse which the first Adam brought into the world, if we are enabled, through grace, to feel interested in the blessings procured by the second Adam “*the Lord from heaven.*” Our Saviour in his sermon, informed his hearers, that he came not to destroy the law, but to fulfil it. He came into the world not only to die for sinners, but to teach us how we ought to live; and though good works in themselves will never carry us to heaven, yet we are assured in the Bible, that “*without holiness no man shall see the Lord;*” therefore Christ taught those who followed him to pay due regard to all the laws of God, not only as regarded the out-

ward observance of them, but also in sincerity of heart.

In this sermon he warns them, that whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause, is guilty of murder; whosoever encourages lust in his heart, is guilty of adultery; he cautions them against taking the name of God in vain; he admonishes them to love their enemies and to do good to them; and adds, “ *Be ye perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.*” Observe from hence the great importance of a holy life, and strive to learn the need of God’s grace to make us pure in heart; and as he has promised to give his holy Spirit to them who ask him (Luke xi. 13). let us pray earnestly for this inestimable blessing, that our hearts may be truly purified and sanctified.





*If to the altar thou with gifts repair  
Unreconcil'd, expect no audience there!  
Propitiate first thy brother, else in vain  
From Heav'n thou dost acceptance hope to gain*

## BROTHERLY LOVE.

Forgive, forgiven! my followers prove;  
 Melt curses down with pray'rs, and hate with love,  
 Your great exemplar, make that love divine,  
 Whose fruitful show'rs still fall, whose sun does shine.

BY our brother, we are to understand any person, though ever so much our inferior; for we are all made of one blood. Opprobrious language to our brother, when it proceeds from anger and malice within, is great wickedness. Christ says, "*Whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause, shall be in danger of the judgment, and whosoever shall say to his brother, Raca, shall be in danger of the council; but whosoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be in danger of hell fire.*" (Matthew v. 22.) Let us then carefully preserve and promote christian love and peace with all our brethren; and if at any time a breach happens, we should labour



for a reconciliation, by confessing our fault, begging his pardon, and making or offering satisfaction for wrong done in word or deed; and this we should do quickly: because, till this be done, we are unfit for communion with God in holy ordinances.

When we are addressing ourselves to any religious exercises, it is good for us to take that occasion of serious reflection and self-examination. Envy, malice, and uncharitableness are so displeasing to God, that nothing can please him which comes from a heart so corrupted. Love is so much better than all burnt-offerings and sacrifice, that God will have reconciliation made with an offended brother before the gift is offered. "*Leave there thy gift before the altar.*" One sin will never excuse another, but will rather double the guilt. Want of charity cannot justify the want of piety. The diffi-

culty is easily got over : those who have wronged us, we must forgive ; and those whom we have wronged, we must make satisfaction to, or at least offer it, so that if reconciliation be not made, it may not be our fault. Till this be done, we lie exposed to much danger. If the offence we have committed exposes us to legal punishment, it is our wisdom and duty to prevent that by humble submission, and a just and peaceable satisfaction. A prison is an uncomfortable place to those who are brought to it by their own pride and prodigality. And also upon a spiritual account, because while the quarrel continues, they are unfit to come to the table of the Lord, so they are unfit to die ; if they persist in this sin, there is danger lest they be suddenly snatched away by the wrath of God, whose judgment they cannot escape. Hell is a prison for all that live and

die in malice and uncharitableness : out of that prison there is no rescue, no redemption.

If we examine the state of our hearts, and the government of our passion, we shall feel our great need of forgiveness, and also perceive our need of the aid and powerful influences of the Holy Spirit in seeking peace with God, through Jesus Christ. When we reflect on the great uncertainty of life, we shall feel how needful it is to seek peace with God without delay.





*To judge another, let not man presume  
 As he'd have mercy at the last great day  
 What rigid measure you to others give  
 Press'd down and running o'er you shall*

## THE SINNER REPROVED.

Why so exact and nice, fond mortal, why,  
To find small motes within thy brother's eye;  
Though beams within thine own thou can'st not spy.

**WE** must not judge our brother, that is, we must not speak evil of any one; we must not judge rashly, nor pass judgment upon our brother without any ground. We must not judge uncharitably, unmercifully, nor with a spirit of revenge. We must not judge the hearts of others, nor their intentions: it is God's prerogative to try the heart.

If we judge others, we may expect to be ourselves judged. Commonly, none are more censured, than those who are most censorious.

Christ did not forbid his disciples to form a judgment of men's state and character, according to their avowed principles and con-

duct ; and many of our duties require us so to do. But we ought not to be officious, rash, or severe, in forming a judgment ; or hasty in declaring it.

What would become of us, if God should be as exact and severe in judging us, as some are in judging others ? We may justly expect it, if we are extreme to mark what our brethern do amiss. In this, as in other things, the violent dealings of men return on their own heads.

Jesus Christ says, "*Judge not, that ye be not judged. And why beholdest thou the mote (the lesser sin) that is in thy brother's eye, but considerest not the beam (the greater sin) that is in thine own eye ? Thou hypocrite, first cast out the beam out of thine own eye ; and then shalt thou see clearly to cast out the mote out of thy brother's eye.*" (Matthew vii. 1, 3, 5.)

Here is a just reproof to the censorious, who quarrel with their brethren for small faults, while they allow themselves in great ones. Some sins are comparatively as motes, while others are as beams; some as a gnat, others as a camel: but not that there is any little; if it be a mote, or splinter, it is in the eye; if a gnat, it is in the throat; it is painful and perilous, and we cannot be at ease or well till they are got out. That which charity teaches us to call but a splinter in our brother's eye, true repentance and a deep sorrow will teach us to call a beam in our own. There are many who are under the guilt and dominion of great sins, and yet they satisfy themselves, as if they needed no repentance nor reformation; it is as strange as to see a man can be in such a sinful, miserable condition, and not be aware of it, as that a man should have a beam in his eye, and



not consider it; but the god of this world blinds their minds.

This is a good rule for reprovers. Go in the right method, first cast the beam out of thine own eye. I must first reform myself, that I may help to reform my brother, and qualify myself to reprove him.

All reformation and practical religion should begin in ourselves; and instead of being uncharitably severe in censuring others, we should carefully look into our own hearts and conduct, condemn and correct what is amiss in ourselves; and let Jesus' law of honesty and brotherly kindness be the constant rule of our life and actions.





*Two paths there are, thro' which all mortals go,  
This leads to bliss, and that declines to woe,  
With company 'tis crowded every where,  
The rich, the gay, the witty, and the fair.*

## THE BROAD AND NARROW WAY.

Ah, fondly-blinded, whither will they run ;  
 Why in such headlong-haste to be undone !  
 See, how they press, death's ample gate to win,  
 How heedless of the flames that glares within !

OUR blessed Saviour came down from heaven to teach us not only what we are to know and believe, but also what we are to do ; not only our duty towards God, but towards men. We must, in our dealings with mankind, suppose ourselves in the particular case and circumstances of those with whom we have to do, and act accordingly—in short, we should ever bear in mind, our Saviour's sublime maxim, *“ Do unto all men as you would they should do unto you.”* And if you would be holy and happy members of Christ's kingdom of glory, you must follow his directions. *“ Enter ye in at the strait gate ; for*

*wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be that go in thereat: strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it."* (Matthew vii. 13. 14.)

Observe, there are but two ways, right and wrong, good and evil; the way to heaven, and the way to hell—in the one of which all are going; there is no middle place hereafter, no middle way now. All the children of men are saints or sinners, godly or ungodly. If we follow the multitude, it will be to do evil; if we go with the crowd, it will be the wrong way.

That which should affright us from it is, that it leads to everlasting destruction. Whether it be the high-way of open profaneness, or the back-way of close hypocrisy,

if it be a way of sin, it will be our ruin, if we repent not.

Christ graciously deals faithfully with us, and tells us that the gate is strait. Conversion and regeneration are the gate to enter this way, out of a state of sin into a state of grace. This is a strait gate, hard to find, and hard to get through. The mind must be changed, corrupt habits broken off; much opposition must be struggled with. It is easier to set a man against all the world than against himself, and yet this must be done in conversion. High thoughts must be brought down; we must deny ourselves, we must be willing to forsake all for an interest in Christ. The gate is strait to all, but to some straiter than to others; it is to the rich, or to those that have been long prejudiced against religion. The gate is strait; but blessed be God, it is not yet shut

up, nor locked against us, nor kept with a flaming sword, as it will be shortly.

The matter is fairly stated : life and death, good and evil, are set before you—both the ways, and both the ends. Now let the matter be considered impartially, and then choose which you will walk in. Delay not ; but *enter ye in at the strait gate* ; apply to it by sincere and constant prayer, and a wide door shall be opened, and an effectual one. It is very true, we can neither go in, nor proceed, without Divine grace ; but it is as true, that grace is freely offered, and shall not be wanting, to all those that earnestly seek it. “*Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.*” (Heb. iv. 16.)







*Who hears attentive, and my word obeys,  
He's like the man that firm foundations lays,  
On a strong rock, whose building storms defies,  
Though rains descend, and angry billows rise*

## THE WISE & FOOLISH BUILDERS.

But see how the Heav'ns with clouds and tempests frown,  
What cataracts of rain come pouring down !  
Till with a crack the walls come tumbling o'er,  
And spread the faithless sands whereon they stood before.

JESUS CHRIST preached his gospel of the kingdom, that is, of grace and glory ; and wherever he went, he confirmed his Divine mission by the variety of miracles which he wrought. On his famous Sermon on the Mount, which we noticed generally in pages 49 to 53 of this work, he was followed by great multitudes anxious to hear his heavenly doctrine. This sermon, however frequently read, is always new. It is the longest public discourse of Christ that is written for our instruction, and every part of it is connected with the great doctrine of salvation. The true gospel of Christ is more practical than any other doctrine ; and

none will be happy in this world, or in the next, who do not seek it from Christ by the rule of his word. “ *Whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, who built his house upon a rock.*” (Matthew vii. 24.)

The general scope of this parable teaches us to hear and to do the sayings of the Lord Jesus. We have every one of us a house to build, and that house is our hope for heaven. It ought to be our chief and constant care to make our calling and election sure, and so we make our salvation sure. All who take upon them a profession of religion, profess to inquire “ *what they shall do to be saved.*”

There is a rock provided for us to build this house upon, and that rock is Christ. We must ground our hopes of heaven upon *the fulness* of Christ’s merit for the pardon

of sin; the power of his Spirit, for the sanctification of our nature; and the prevalence of his intercession, for the conveyance of all that good which he has purchased for us. There is that in him, as he is made known to us in the gospel, which is sufficient to answer all the necessities of our case; he is a Saviour to the uttermost. The church is built upon this rock, and so is every believer. He is strong and immovable as a rock; we may venture our all upon him, and shall not be made ashamed of our hope.

Those hopes which are built upon Christ, the Rock, will stand when the storm comes. They will be preservation, both from desertion and from prevailing disquiet. They will be as *an anchor of the soul, sure and stedfast*. Those hopes will take off the terror of death and the grave; will carry cheerfully through that dark valley; will be ap-

proved by the Judge; and will be crowned with endless glory.

Those hopes which foolish builders ground upon any thing but Christ, will yield no true comfort and satisfaction in trouble, in the hour of death, and in the day of judgment. The house fell in the storm, when the builder had most need of it, and expected it would be a shelter to him. It fell when it was too late to build another. May the Lord make us wise builders for eternity! May we come to Christ; hear, believe his word, and show our faith by our works of conscientious, unreserved obedience. Then nothing shall separate us from the love of Christ Jesus.





*When fame had spread the palsied servant's case  
Another, lingering of the same disease,  
Through the uncover'd roof his friends convey  
And at the feet of Jesus humbly lay*

## JESUS HEALS A PARALYTIC.

Pleased with their faith Christ said—Thy sins forgiv'n,  
 I loose on earth, and thou art loos'd in Heav'n:  
 He rose to health and vigorous strength; and bore  
 The useless couch away, on which he laid before.

*“THEY brought to him a man sick of the palsy, lying on a bed; and Jesus seeing their faith, said unto the sick of the palsy, Son, be of good cheer; thy sins be forgiven thee.”* (Matthew ix. 2.) The faith of the friends of the poor afflicted man, was a strong faith; they firmly believed that Jesus Christ both could and would heal him

The favour of Christ. in what he said to him; *“Son be of good cheer; thy sins be forgiven thee.”* This was a sovereign cordial to a sick man, and was enough to make all his bed in his sickness; and to make it easy to him. Christ bids him



to be of good cheer, and then he is instantly cured. He would have those to whom he bestows his gifts, to be cheerful in seeking him, and in trusting in him; to be of good courage. *Thy sins are forgiven thee*, therefore thou shalt be healed. Sin may be pardoned, and yet the sickness not removed; the sickness may be removed, and yet sin not pardoned: but if we have the comfort of our reconciliation to God, with the comfort of our recovery from sickness, this makes it a mercy indeed.

Whether the sick man most desired or expected this forgiveness at the hands of Christ, we cannot tell; but if he thought not of it, what a surprise of love! They that earnestly seek pardon with sorrow, shall assuredly find it with joy; and they that find it without previous sorrow, shall *yet be sure to feel that sorrow for sin*

after they receive pardon, if they do not before. Well may Christ say, *Be of good courage, thy sins are forgiven thee.* What can dismay after this? The heart wholly filled with Divine peace and love, bears up all, and sorrow is turned into joy. But though this is great encouragement to sinners, it is by no means an encouragement to sin. If thou confess thy sins to Jesus Christ, as thy malady and misery, and pray to be cured of and be delivered from them, it is well; but to presume to come with them, as thy darlings and delight, thinking still to retain them, and receive Christ's favour, is a great mistake, a miserable delusion. The intention of the blessed Jesus in the redemption he wrought, is to separate our hearts from all sin.

The scribes cavilled at that which

Christ said and did, and branded it as blasphemy; and so it would have been, if he had not had Divine power for it.

Our Lord Jesus has perfect knowledge of all that we say or think within ourselves. Thoughts are secret, yet open before Christ, the eternal Word. He could say to the scribes, who disputed his power, Wherefore think ye evil in your hearts? There is a great deal of evil in sinful thoughts. In them lies the root of bitterness. He asserted his authority in the kingdom of grace; and showed that the Son of man, the Mediator, has power on earth to forgive sins. Christ's miracles clearly confirm that he was the Son of God; the power that appeared in his cures, proved him actually sent of God; and the pity that appeared in them, proved that he came from heaven *"to seek and to save."*





*As in his office there he sat and told  
The glittering heaps of all-commanding gold,  
Drums, shekels, talents, him our Lord did see,  
And kindly thus accost him, "Follow me".*

## MATTHEW CALLED.

Struck with his words he runs without delay,  
The world has nothing now to bribe his stay.  
O! may we imitate his happy choice!  
Like him, O Son of God! obey thy voice.

*“JESUS saw a man, named Matthew, sitting at the receipt of custom; and he saith unto him, Follow me; and he arose, and followed him.”* (Matthew ix. 9.)

Matthew, surnamed Levi, was a native of Galilee. He was called by Jesus Christ to be a witness of his words and works. This sacred penman continued to attend our Lord till his resurrection; and he, with the other apostles, received the gift of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost.

Matthew was sitting at the receipt of custom, for he was a publican, or collector of the taxes. He was in is calling, like

the rest were of those whom Christ called. But it was a calling of ill name among the Jewish people, because it was attended with much corruption and temptation, and there were few in that employ who were honest men. Matthew himself owns what he was before his conversion, as does St Paul (1 Timothy i. 13), that the grace of Christ in calling him might be the more magnified.

That word was enough, “*Follow me ;*” that power sweetly inclines, which could forcibly command. We are all naturally averse from thee, O God ; do thou bid us follow thee ; draw us by thy powerful word, and we shall run after thee. Speak by the effectual word of the Spirit to our heart : the world cannot hinder us ; Satan cannot stop our way ; we shall arise and follow thee.

*A saving change is wrought in the soul*

by Christ as the author, and his word as the means. The call was effectual, for Matthew arose, and followed him immediately; neither denied nor deferred his obedience. The power of Divine grace answers and overcomes all objections. Neither his commission for his place, nor his gains by it, could detain him, when Christ called him. He quitted his post, and though we find the disciples that were fishers, occasionally fishing again afterwards, we never find St. Matthew at the receipt of custom again.

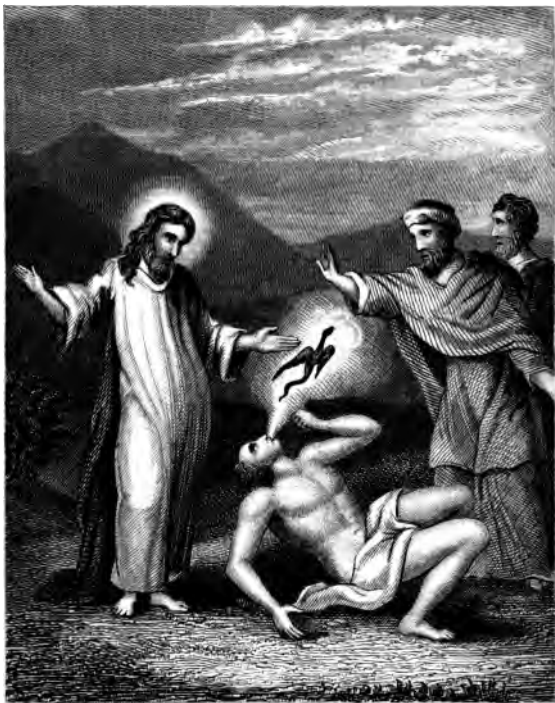
Christ, in all his discourses, urges the nature and end of his own commission. His errand was to call to repentance. This was his first text, (chap. iv. 17,) and it was the tendency of all his sermons. The gospel call is a call to repentance; a call to us to change our mind, and to change our way. His errand lay not with the righteous, but with



sinners. That is, if the children of men had not been sinners, there had been no occasion for Christ's coming among them. He is the Saviour, not of man as man, but of man as a fallen creature. Had the first Adam continued in original righteousness, we had not needed a second Adam. Let *us* then inquire whether we have discovered our need of a Saviour, and have learned to follow the directions of his gospel.

The important instruction with which the Gospel of St. Matthew is filled, cannot fail to render the study of it increasingly satisfactory to every pious mind. Let us lift up our hearts in constant prayer for faith in believing the doctrine and precepts which here, by Divine authority, demand our attention.





*Some sullen demon did a wretch invade,  
And struck him dumb; to Jesus brought for aid,  
With eyes of pity first he him survey'd,  
Then bids the fiend dislodge, who dares not stay*

## JESUS CASTS OUT A DUMB SPIRIT.

Tho.' murmr'ing and reluctant flies away  
 The poor man freed from his infernal guest  
 His great physician's power aloud confess'd

*“THEY brought to him a dumb man possessed of a devil. And when the devil was cast out, the dumb spake: and the multitudes marvelled, saying, It was never so seen in Israel.”* (Matthew ix . 32, 33.)

Here is the healing of a dumb man. His case was very deplorable. This poor creature they brought to Christ, who healed not only those that came of themselves in in their own faith, but those who were brought to him by their friends in the faith of others.

*“When the devil was cast out, the dumb spake.”* Christ's cures strike at the root, and remove the effect by taking away the

cause; they open the lips, by breaking Satan's power in the soul. When Christ, by his grace, cast the devil out of a soul, presently the dumb speaks.

The Pharisees blasphemed. When they could not gainsay the convincing evidence of these miracles, they fathered them upon the devil, as if they had been wrought by compact and collusion. Because the people marvelled, they must say something to diminish the miracle, and this was all they could say.

Nothing can convince those who are under the power of pride. They will believe any thing, however false or absurd, rather than the Holy Scripture; while the reflections they cast on those who are doing good to their fellow-creatures, only show the enmity of their hearts against God.

*Though the Pharisees cavilled at Christ,*

and opposed him, he went on with his holy work; he told them of a kingdom of grace and glory, now to be set up under the government of a Mediator: this was good news, glad tidings of great joy.

He visited not only the great and wealthy cities, but the poor obscure villages; there he preached, there he healed. The souls of the meanest in the world are as precious to Christ, and should be so to us, as the souls of those of the great and rich. He, therefore, to prove that the design of the Gospel is to heal and to save, was graciously pleased, when he appointed his twelve disciples, to give "*them power against unclean spirits, to cast them out, and heal all manner of sickness and disease.*" (x. 1.)

Great multitudes resorted from distant places to hear Christ's doctrine and witness his miracles. They were languishing in

cause; they open the lips, by breaking Satan's power in the soul. When Christ, by his grace, cast the devil out of a soul, presently the dumb speaks.

The Pharisees blasphemed. When they could not gainsay the convincing evidence of these miracles, they fathered them upon the devil, as if they had been wrought by compact and collusion. Because the people marvelled, they must say something to diminish the miracle, and could say.

Nothing can conquer the power of any thing, however, than the Holy Scriptures. They cast on those who are to their fellow-creatures, on the enmity of their hearts against them. Though the Pharisees







*Peter leap'd down and trod the boisterous wave,  
But sinking cri'd, at last, "O master save!"  
He did, but did his want of faith upbraid;  
Then to the ship in safety him convey'd.*

## CHRIST SAVES PETER.

It was a dismal and tempestuous night  
No cheerful star's afford their friendly light;  
When across the lake the twelve directly bore;  
The Master left behind them on the shore.

IT was an instance of Peter's faith, that he ventured upon the water when Christ called him. To quit the safety of the ship, regardless of the threatening waves, argued very strong dependence upon the power and word of Christ.

He bids him come. The Gospel call is *come, come to Christ*; yes, you may venture all in his hands, and commit the keeping of your souls to him; venture through a stormy sea, a troubled world, to Jesus Christ. He bore him up when he did come. "*Peter walked upon the water.*" (Matthew .xiv. 29.) Through faith and the strength of Christ we are borne up above the world,

enabled to trample upon it, kept from sinking into it, preserved from being overwhelmed by it, and obtain victory over it.

Christ bid him come, not only that he might walk upon the water, and thereby know his Lord's power, but that he might sink, and feel his own weakness; for, as he would encourage his faith, so he would check his confidence.

Peter was afraid, The strongest faith and the greatest courage have a mixture of fear. Those that can say, "*Lord, I believe,*" must also say, "*Lord, help thou mine unbelief.*" Nothing but perfect love will cast out fear.

Observe the effect of this fear. While faith kept up, Peter kept above water; but when faith faltered or wavered, he began to sink. We are upheld, as we are saved, *through faith*. He cried, "*Lord, save me.*"

Christ is the great Saviour; he came to save: those who would be saved, must not only come to him, but cry to him for salvation. “*Lord, have mercy upon us. Christ, have mercy upon us.*”

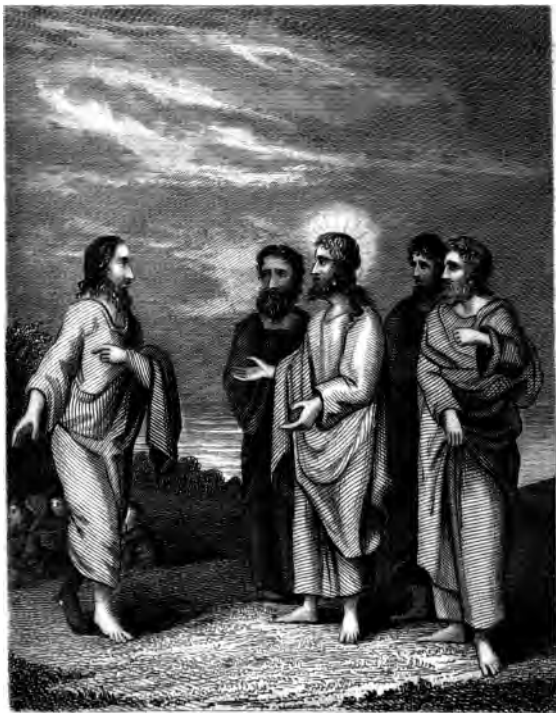
Our discouraging doubts and fears are all owing to the weakness of our faith. Could we but believe more, we should doubt less. Jesus doth not cast off weak believers, but he is not pleased with the weakness of our faith. “*Wherefore didst thou doubt?*” Our doubts and fears would soon vanish upon strict inquiry into their cause; for there is no good reason why Christ’s disciples should be of a doubtful mind.

When Christ was come into the ship, they were presently on the shore. The storm ceased. When Christ comes into a soul, he calms all uneasiness, and communicates peace.

None but the Saviour could multiply the loaves, none but its Governor could walk upon the waters of the sea: the disciples yield to the evidence, and confess their faith; "*Of a truth thou art the Son of God.*" They knew before that he was the Son of God, but now they know it more fully. Faith, after a conflict with unbelief, is sometimes the more active. It is good for children to know more and more of the certainty of those things wherein they have been instructed.

The disciples were suitably affected; they worshipped Christ. Faith is the proper principle of worship, and worship the genuine production of faith. He that comes to God, must believe; and he that believes in God, will come. (Hebrews xi. 6.)





*O ye blinded leaders of the blind  
In vain you hope the ways of life to find;  
Into the pit of pain you all shall slide;  
And willfully misled, with their unfaithful guide.*

## THE SCRIBES AND PHARISEES.

God's command our parents bids obey,  
On pain of death; but your traditions say;  
Whoe'er to corban does his substance give,  
He need no more his aged sire relieve.

OUR LORD's fame became so great, that some of the inhabitants of Jerusalem came to watch and ensnare him. The scribes and Pharisees accused him, saying "*Why do thy disciples transgress the tradition of the elders? But he answered and said. Why do ye also transgress the commandment of God by your tradition? For God commanded, saying, Honour thy father and mother: and, He that curseth father or mother, let him die the death.*" (Matthew xv. 2, 3, 4).

Our blessed Lord spoke of their traditions as novel inventions of their own, and pointed out one instance in which this was



notoriously the case, that of their transgressing the fifth commandment. The whole of children's duty to their parents is included in honouring them, and is the foundation of all the rest. Our Saviour here speaks of the duty of children in supporting their parents, and being in every way serviceable to their comfort; and he insists upon the penalty annexed to the disobeying of this commandment, "*He that curseth father or mother, let him die the death.*" By our Saviour's application of this law, it appears, that denying service or relief to parents is included in cursing them.

Their tradition was—That a man could not in any case bestow his worldly estate better than to give it to the priest, and devote it to the service of the temple. And all other obligations, though ever so just and sacred, *were superseded*, and a man was thereby

discharged from them. This proceeded partly from the superstitious regard they had to the temple, and partly from their love of money; for what was given to the temple, the priests were gainers by. See how they allowed the application of this to the case of the children. When their parents' necessities called for their assistance, they pleaded that all they could spare from themselves and their children, they had devoted to the treasury of the temple; and therefore their parents must expect nothing from them. Many undutiful, unnatural children made use of this plea, and the Pharisees justified them in it.

Whatever leads to disobedience, does, in effect, make void the command; and those who take upon them to dispense with God's law, do, in Christ's account, repeal and annul it. To break the law is bad; but to

teach men so, as the scribes and Pharisees did, is much worse. But thanks be to God, in spite of them, and of all their traditions, the command stands in full force and power.

Particularly note our Lord's regard to the right discharge of duties to each other, especially of that of children to their parents. No forms, notions charities, nor any thing else that looks like faith, zeal, and piety, can prove those to be true Christians who neglect to honour their father or mother, or to supply their wants.

*“Children, obey your parents in the Lord; for this is right. Obey your parents in all things; for this is well pleasing to the Lord.”* (Ephesians v. 1, Colossians iii, 20.





*Too soon did he his fellow servant find ,  
From whom, as chanc'd a trifling sum behind ,  
An hundred pence was on account unpaid ;  
Throttling he seiz'd him, did the wretch upbraid .*

## THE CRUEL FELLOW-SERVANT.

“Cruel and wicked!” thy request I heard,  
And hadst thou no compassion, no regard  
To other’s prayers? Hence from my sight away,  
In dungeon mourn, till thou the debt do pay.

THE Lord’s *“servant went out, and found one of his fellow-servants which owed him an hundred pence : and he laid hands on him, and took him by the throat, saying, Pay me that thou owest. And his fellow-servant fell down at his feet, and besought him, saying, have patience with me, and I will pay thee all. And he would not, but went and cast him into prison, till he should pay the debt.”* (Matt. xviii. 28, 29, 30.)

The haughty servant’s extreme severity towards his poor fellow-servant, notwithstanding his Lord’s clemency toward him, represents the sin of those who are unmerciful towards their fellow-creatures. How very

small the debt, compared with the *ten thousand talents* which his lord forgave him—*only a hundred pence*. What needed this violence? How submissive the debtor was! the poor man's request was, "*Have patience with me.*" He thus honestly confesses the debt, and only begs for a little time.

The rest of the servants were much concerned. They came and told their lord. But observe how the master reproved the servant's cruelty. Unmercifulness is great wickedness. He upbraids him with the mercy he had found. Consider, it was all that debt; that great debt: *ten thousand talents*. The master thence shows him the obligation he was under to be merciful to his poor fellow-servant. It is justly expected that such as have received mercy, should show mercy. From what we have felt ourselves, we can better have fellow-feeling

with our brethern. The master revokes his pardon. He delivered him to the tormentors, till he should pay all that was due unto himself.

We do not forgive our offending brother aright, or acceptably, if we do not forgive from the heart, for God knows the secrets of all hearts. No malice must be harboured there, no projects of revenge or desire of it. Those who do not forgive their brother's trespasses, never truly repented of their own, nor ever truly believed the gospel; and therefore that which is taken away, is only what they seem to have. It is indispensably necessary to pardon and peace, that we not only act justly, but we must love mercy. It is an essential part of that religion, which is pure and undefiled before God and the Father, of that wisdom from above, which is gentle and easy to be



entreated. How will they answer, who, though they bear the Christian name, persist in unmerciful treatment of their brethren, as if the laws of Christ might be dispensed with, to gratify their unbridled passions?

The humbled sinner relies only on free, abounding mercy, through the ransom of the death of Christ. His sins are thus blotted out, while his conduct towards others proves him a partaker of the Spirit of Christ. Let us then seek more and more for the renewing grace of God, to teach us to forgive others as we hope to be forgiven by Him.





*Amidst the crowded room a wretch appears,  
Who in contempt a sordid garment wears;  
The king commands to seize, and bind him fast,  
And into dungeons deep, and utter darkness cast.*

## THE MARRIAGE FEAST.

A monarch who, with regal pomp and state,  
 The nuptials of his son would celebrate,  
 His servants sent t' invite the country round;  
 But all, with one consent, excuses found.

*“ A CERTAIN king made a marriage for his son. And when the king came in to see the guests, he saw there a man which had not on a wedding garment. The king said to the servants, Bind him hand and foot, and take him away,” &c. (Matt xxii. 2, 11, 13.)*

This parable of the marriage feast displays the motive of Christ's humiliation, with its effects upon his people, and on the despisers of his gospel. The abundant and rich provision made for sinners in the gospel, is represented by a royal feast made by a king, with all the eastern magnificence and liberality, on the occasion of the marriage.

of his son. The king is God, a great King, King of kings. Christ is the Bridegroom; the church is the bride; the gospel day is the day of his espousals. The gospel covenant is a marriage covenant betwixt Christ and believers. A feast was made for love, it is a reconciliation feast, a token of God's good-will toward men.

The gospel calls and offers are represented by an invitation to this feast. The guests first invited were the Jews. The guests are called, or bidden to the wedding. All that are within hearing of the joyful sound of the Gospel, to them the word of this invitation is sent. But they made light of the marriage feast, because there were others things they had more mind to. The business and profit of worldly employments prove great hinderance to many in coming *to Christ*. It is true, that both farmers and

merchants must be diligent, but not so as to keep them from making religion their first consideration.

The king saw a man who had not on a wedding garment. This man was not naked; some raiment he had, but not a wedding garment. Those, and those only, who put on the Lord Jesus, that have a Christian temper of mind, and are adorned with Christian graces, who live by faith in Christ, have the wedding garment.

There are many in the church who are false friends to Jesus Christ; who say that they love him, while their hearts are far from him. "*How camest thou in hither ?*" The king does not chide the servants for letting him in, but checks his presumption. The day is coming, when hypocrites will be called to account for all their presump-

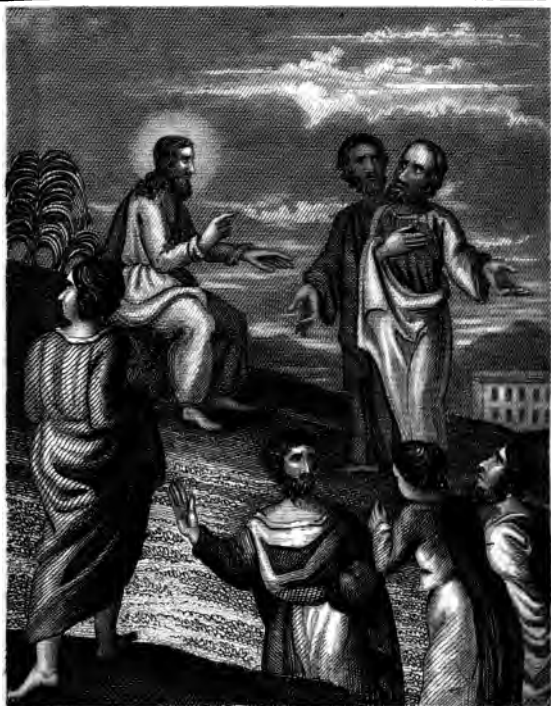
tuous intrusion into gospel ordinances, and usurpation of gospel privileges.

He was speechless; being condemned by his own conscience. Those who lived within the church, and who died without Christ, will not have one word to say for themselves in the judgment of the great day; they will be without excuse. He is pinioned, as condemned malefactors were. In the day of judgment, hypocrites will be bound; angels shall bind up these tares in bundles for the fire (Matt. xiii. 41); they cannot resist or out-run their punishment.

*“Take him away !”* Those who walk unworthily of Christianity, forfeit all the happiness they presumptuously claimed. He is ordered into *“outer darkness; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.”* (Matt. xxii 13.)







*On lofty Olivet, beneath the shade,  
Whence the devoted city he survey'd,  
Our Saviour sat; the Apostles him attend,  
And ask him, when the world would end.*

## SIGNS OF CHRIST'S COMING.

And he to judgment come? He thus replies—  
 Be not deceiv'd; for nation first must rise,  
 Encountering nation, plagues and famine reign,  
 These the beginning of their, the hopeless, pain.

OUR LORD proceeded with his disciples to the Mount of Olives, where the temple was full in view; and as he sat on the mount the disciples asked him, "*saying, Tell us, when shall these things be? and what shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world?*" (Matthew xxiv. 3.)

*When shall these things be?* Christ gives them no answer to that question, for it is not for us to know the times; but they had asked, *What shall be the sign?* This question he answers fully, for we are concerned to understand the signs of the times. The prophecy primarily respects the events near at hand—the destruction of Jerusalem, the

period of the Jewish church and state, the calling of the Gentiles, and the setting up of Christ's kingdom in the world ; but it also points to the general judgment. It is observable, that what Christ here saith to his disciples, tends more to engage their caution than to satisfy their curiosity ; more to prepare them for the events that should happen, than to give them a distinct idea of the events themselves. Christ's warnings are designed to engage our watchfulness ; and though the elect shall be preserved from delusion, yet they will be preserved by the use of appointed means, and regard to the cautions of the word. We are kept through faith in Christ's word, which he has told us before.

Our Lord foretells wars and great commotions among nations. When Christ was *born, there was universal peace in the em-*

pire. From the time that the Jews rejected Christ, and he left their house desolate, the sword never departed from them, because he had given it a charge against a hypocritical nation and the people of his wrath.

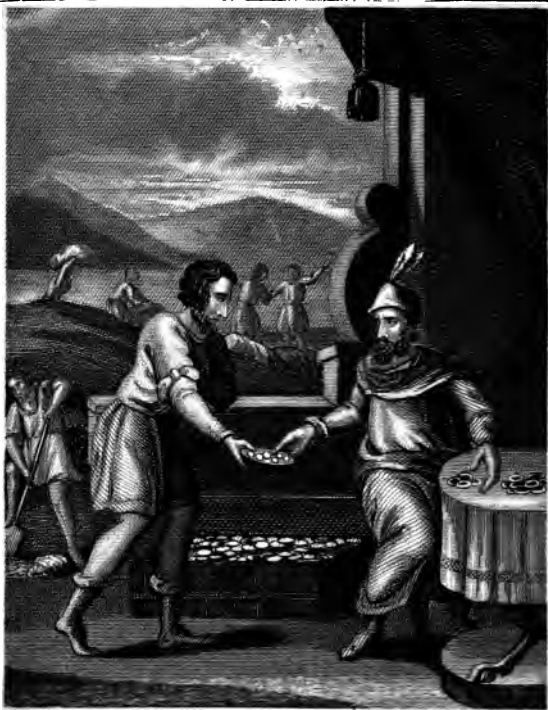
Concerning Christ's second coming, it is foretold that there shall be a great change, in order to the making all things new. Then shall be the restitution of all things. It shall be a visible change. It shall be a universal change. The glorious appearance of our Lord Jesus, who will then show himself as the brightness of his Father's glory, and the express image of his person, will darken the sun and moon; they will have no glory, because of the glory that excelleth. (2 Corinthians iii. 10.)

There is a certain day and hour fixed for the judgment to come; it is called the day of the Lord, because so unalterably fixed.

No man knows it; not the wisest, not the best, by any Divine discovery. We all know that there shall be a day, but no one knows when it shall be; no, not even the angels. This is one of those secret things which belong to the Lord. The uncertainty of the time of Christ's coming is, to those who are watchful, a savour of life unto life, and makes them more watchful; but to those who are careless, it is a savour of death unto death, and makes them more careless.

O Lord Jesus Christ, we thy children earnestly desire to be found in the number of thy faithful and adoring servants at thy second coming to judge the world; and hope, through thy mercy, to be admitted into thine everlasting kingdom in heaven.





*A Lord, e'er he to distant regions goes,  
Among his servants would his goods dispose,  
Five talents one, the second two receives,  
A single talent to the last he gives.*

## THE PARABLE OF THE TALENTS.

The two, so well in trade the stock he lent  
 Improv'd, they gain'd their master cent, per cent.  
 The third with lazy stubbornness and pride,  
 His useless talent in the ground did hide.

*“TO one he gave five talents, to another two, and to another one; to every man according to his ability; and straightway took his journey.”* (Matthew xxv. 15.) In this parable the master is Christ, the servants are Christians, his own servants, and should be devoted to his praise, and employed in his service.

Two of the servants were diligent and faithful; as soon as their master was gone, they applied to business. The endowments of the mind must be used in subservience to religion; the enjoyments of the world must be improved for the honour of Christ. The ordinances of the Gospel, and our ex-



portunities of attending them, must be improved to the end for which they were instituted, and communion with God kept up by them; and the gifts and graces of the Spirit must be exercised: this is trading with our talents.

The third servant did ill. Doubtless there are many that have five talents, and bury them all; great abilities, great advantages, and yet do no good with them: and if he who had but one talent, be reckoned with for burying that one, much more will they be accounted offenders that have more.

He hid his talent in the earth (ver. 25), for fear it should be stolen; he did not mispend or misemploy it, but he hid it. Treasure heaped together is an evil, it does good to nobody; and so it is in spiritual gifts—many have them, and make no use of them. *Those who have estates, and do not devote*

them to works of piety and charity; those who have power and interest, and do not with it promote religion in the places where they live; and ministers that have capacities and opportunities of doing good, but do not stir up the gift that is in them, are slothful servants.

Christ will call those, and those only, good servants, that have done well; for it is *by patient continuance in well-doing that we seek this glory and honour.*

The master said unto each of the two diligent servants on reckoning with them, *“WELL DONE, good and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things. enter thou into the joy of thy lord.”* (ver. 21, 23.)

The slothful servant is sentenced to be deprived of his talent. The meaning of this

part of the parable we have in the reason of the sentence, To every one that hath shall be given. This may be applied to the blessings of this life. These we are intrusted with, to be used for the glory of God, and the good of those about us. Now he who has these things, and uses them for these ends, shall have abundance.

The slothful servant is sentenced.—His doom is, to be cast into outer darkness. Here, as in what was said to the faithful servants, our Saviour goes out of the parable into the things intended by it, and this serves as a key to the whole. *Outer darkness, where there is weeping and gnashing of teeth*, is, in Christ's discourses, a usual expression denoting the miseries of the wicked in hell.





*The Son of man with all his glory crown'd  
His father's menial servants waiting round;  
High in midheaven his radiant throne, shall come,  
And to the trembling world pronounce their doom.*

## THE LAST JUDGMENT.


On his right hand shall then the sheep be seen,  
The goats on th' left; how vast a gulph between!  
Then to the just—O, of my Father bless'd!  
Come, come to joy, and peace, and endless rest!

CHRIST'S appearing to judge the world will be splendid and glorious. "*The Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him. And before him shall be gathered all nations; and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth the sheep from the goats.*" (Matthew xxv. 31, 32.) Well may the Christian's eye and heart be fixed upon this unspeakably momentous event, as the glorious object of his hopes; well may he be continually preparing for that day. The great distinction will then be made between the wicked and the godly, and their final doom pronounced everlastingly. This is compared

to a shepherd's dividing between the sheep and the goats. Jesus Christ is the great Shepherd; he now feeds his flock like a shepherd, and will shortly distinguish between those that are his, and those that are not.

The process of the judgment concerning the godly must be first disposed of, that they may sit with Christ in the judgment of the wicked, whose misery will be aggravated by their seeing Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, admitted into the kingdom of heaven prepared for all believers, "*from the foundation of the world.*"

To the wicked on the left hand, the Judge will say, "*Depart from me, ye cursed.*" Every word has a terror in it. In this world they were often called to come to Christ; to come for life and rest, but they rejected his *gracious calls*: justly are they bid to depart



from Christ, that would not come to him. "*Depart, ye cursed,*" Those who would not come to Christ to inherit a blessing, must depart from him under a curse. The righteous are called, "*The blessed of my Father ;*" for their happiness is owing to the grace of God, and his blessing alone.

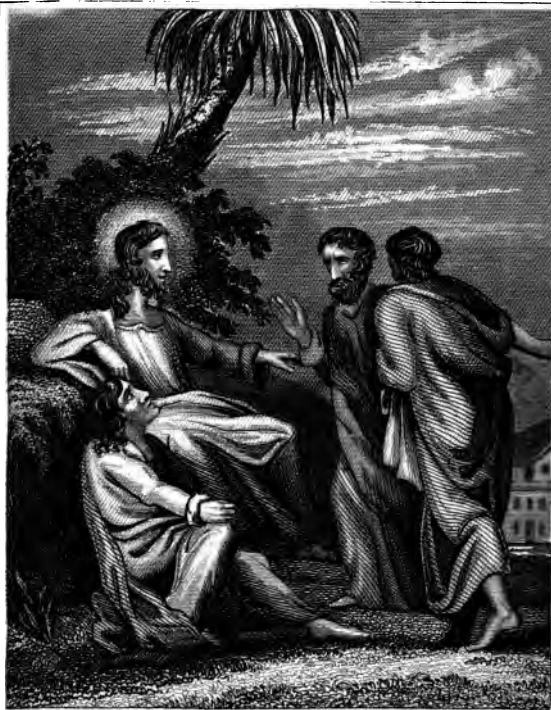
The punishment of the wicked will be an everlasting punishment, for the state is an unalterable state. It can neither be thought that sinners should change their own natures, nor that God should give his grace to change them, when in this world the means of grace were abused. The wicked shall be made to go away into that punishment ; not that they will go willingly ; they are driven from light into darkness : it speaks an irresistible conviction of guilt, and final despair of mercy. The righteous shall go away into life eternal. The life of the soul results



from its union with God, by the mediation of Jesus Christ. The heavenly life consists in the vision and enjoyment of God, in a perfect conformity to him, and an uninterrupted communion with him. It is eternal life.

Thus life and death, good and evil, the blessing and the curse, are set before us, that we may choose our way, and so shall our end be. Let us take warning, and seek that faith in Christ which produces love to him and obedience to his commands, that we may abound in fruits of righteousness here, and be numbered among his saints in glory everlasting.





*And now the sacred festal day took place,  
Which banish'd leaven from the chosen race,  
The disciples came to ask our Lord, where,  
They should for him the paschal feast prepare.*

## THE PASSOVER.

The master saith, "this day I'll be thy guest,  
And with thee celebrate the paschal feast."  
They went, and all things found as he declar'd,  
And soon the wine, and bread, and sacred lamb prepar'd.

*"AND he said, Go into the city to such a man, and say unto him, The Master saith, My time is at hand, I will keep the passover at thy house with my disciples. And the disciples did as Jesus had appointed them; and they made ready the passover." (Matt. xxvi. 18, 19.)*

We have here an account of Christ keeping the passover. It was a tradition of the Jews, that in the days of the Messiah they should be redeemed on the very day of their coming out of Egypt; and Christ died the day after the passover, in which day they began their march.

Observe the place which was particularly

appointed by our Lord to the disciples. He knoweth those who favour his cause, and will graciously visit all who are willing to receive him, as he did this man.

“*Tell him, My time is at hand.*” Christ means the time of his death ; the time, the hour fixed in the counsel of God. He knew when it was at hand. We know not our time, and therefore we should always be ready.

“*Tell him, I will keep the passover at thy house, as the Master.*” Thus, when Christ by his Spirit comes into the heart, he demands admission, and he gains admission, as one who has all power in the heart, and cannot be resisted. His people shall be willing, for he makes them so “*I will keep the passover with my disciples.*” Wherever Christ is welcome, his disciples should also *be welcome*. The disciples did as Jesus

had appointed. Those who would have Christ's presence with them in the gospel passover, must strictly observe his instructions.

We have here Christ's discourse with his disciples at the passover supper. The usual subject at that ceremony was the deliverance of Israel out of Egypt; (Exodus xii. 26, 27); but the great Passover is now ready to be offered. He had often told them, that the Son of man should be betrayed; now he tells them, that one of them should do it, that, when they saw it, they might have their faith in him not diminished, but confirmed. The disciples were troubled that they were left in uncertainty which of them it was. Though not conscious themselves of any such inclination, they feared, and asked, LORD, is it I?

Judas also asked, Is it I? avoiding the

suspicion of guilt from his silence. Many, whose consciences condemn them, are very industrious to justify themselves before men. Christ soon answered his question. Those who betray Christ will betray themselves; their own tongues will be their accusers.

Self-examination, and fervent prayers, are especially proper before partaking of the Lord's Supper; that, as Christ our Pass-over is now sacrificed for us, we may keep **this** commemorative feast with sincerity and truth, renewing our repentance, our faith in his blood, and "*giving up ourselves to his service.*"







*The murdering band approach our Lord, who knew,  
And dar'd the worst their barbarous rage could do,  
Advanced to meet them; by their traitor fowd,  
And with a kiss betray'd he's seiz'd and bound.*

## JUDAS BETRAYS CHRIST.

Not Cephas this; who drew his shining blade,  
 And through the thickest at the traitor made,  
 And missing him, the blow on Malchus fell,  
 Lopp'd off his ear, our Lord his forward zeal  
 Reproves, and did the wounded servant heal.

THE traitor Judas, knowing the place of our Lord's retirement, led thither an armed multitude, with some of the priests and rulers; and in order to distinguish Jesus, he went up to him and kissed him. "*Judas gave them a sign, saying, Whomsoever I shall kiss, that same is he: hold him fast. And forthwith he came to Jesus, and said, Hail, Master, and kissed him.*" (Matt. xxvi. 48, 49.) Our Lord rebuked his hypocrisy and ingratitude, calling him friend, and asked, why he came thus attended? "*Then came they and laid hands on Jesus, and took him.* And one of them

*drew his sword, and struck a servant of the high priest's, and smote off his ear."* (ver. 50, 51.) Our Lord reproved this, intimating that their warfare was to be of a spiritual nature. He needed not such help, as an innumerable company of angels were at his bidding. But then, how should the scriptures be fulfilled, that "*the Messiah must be cut off, and numbered with the transgressors?*" (Isa. liii. 12.)

Though Christ was crucified apparently through weakness, it was voluntary; he submitted to death. This proves that Christ crucified is the power of God.

Christ inquired why they had come out against him thus armed, when he had daily appeared among them unarmed, and only with a few fishermen around him, in the most peaceable manner. If he had not *been willing* to suffer, they could not con-

quer him; but, being willing to suffer, it was folly to come thus armed.

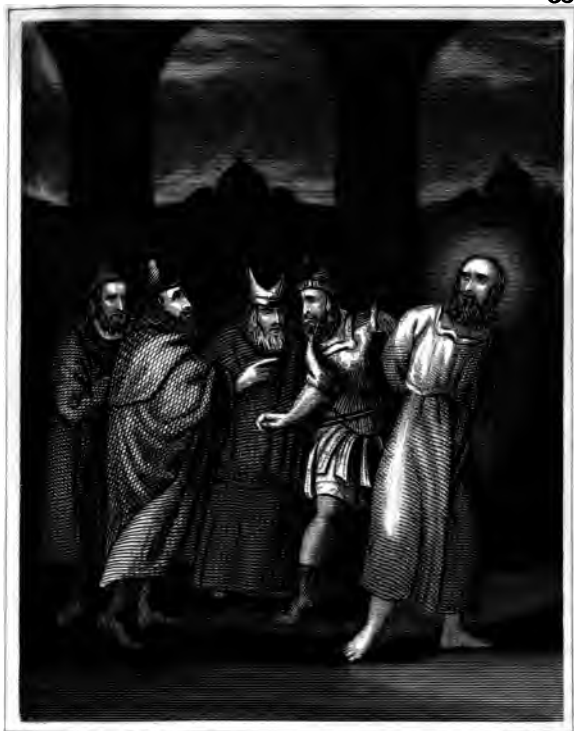
Whatever provocations or trials we may meet with in the world, we should learn of Jesus to possess our souls in patience, and not to use any weapons or violence, except arguments, prayers, and kind actions. Our heavenly Advocate will give all needful protection; but when our appointed time is come, we must submit.

All this was done that the scriptures might be fulfilled. The scriptures are fulfilling every day; and all those scriptures which speak of the Messiah, had their full accomplishment in our Lord Jesus Christ. The disciples forsook him and fled. When they perceived that he intended quietly to yield himself up, their boasted courage and resolution failed. His words were thus fulfilled, but their conduct was not excused.

Our Lord so far overawed the whole party, that they offered no violence to the disciples. It was their sin; and it was a great sin for those who had left all to follow Jesus, now in this great extremity to leave him for what they knew not. What folly, for fear of death, to flee from Him whom they knew and acknowledged to be the Fountain of Life !

It was a part of Christ's sufferings. Christ in this was made a "*curse for us*," being left as one separated to evil. The blessed Saviour of sinners stood thus alone; as he needed not, so he had not the assistance of any others in working out man's salvation.





*Bound and abus'd, our patient Lord they bear  
To Pilate's palace, and accuse him there,  
Pilate in vain the innocent would save,  
The clamorous crowd a murderer would have.*

## CHRIST DELIVERED TO PILATE.

A murderer and a rebel,—then in bands,  
Before the Prince of Life: he wash'd his hands  
To show him guiltless of the blood was shed,  
(Ah, vain 'lustration) then he dooms him dead.

*“AND when they had bound him, they led him away, and delivered him to Pontius Pilate the governor.” (Matt. xxvii. 2.)*

Jesus Christ was now to be the great Sacrifice. They bound him and led him through Jerusalem, to expose him to derision and contempt, where he was but a few days before held in great veneration by the public. They delivered him to Pilate. Christ was to be the Saviour of Jews and Gentiles, and both took part in his death.

The money paid to Judas for betraying Christ, was by him delivered back. Thus even this apostate was made a witness of Christ's innocence, which was glory to



Christ in the midst of his sufferings, and a proof of his victory over Satan. Whatever were his views when he betrayed his Lord, he saw his conduct in a very different light when Jesus was condemned. Then he repented himself, but it was not the true repentance of humility, fear, faith, hope, love, godly sorrow, confession, and renouncing of all sin. His conscience was filled with horror and remorse. He could not but feel the excellency and holiness of Jesus ; the miracles he had witnessed, and the wisdom and love of his gracious Lord, must have rushed into his distracted mind.

Satan, who had tempted Judas to presumption, now left him to despair. He, in the fullest manner, acknowledged to the chief priests that he had sinned, and betrayed an innocent person ; but the rulers *were determined* to put Jesus to death.

This completed his ruin ; casting down the money, ~~he~~ departed, and immediately went and hanged himself, not being able to endure the terror of Divine wrath.

But they had thirsted after this blood, and hired Judas to betray it, and had now condemned it to be shed unjustly. Thus do fools make a mock at sin, as if no harm were done, no hazard run, by committing the greatest wickedness.

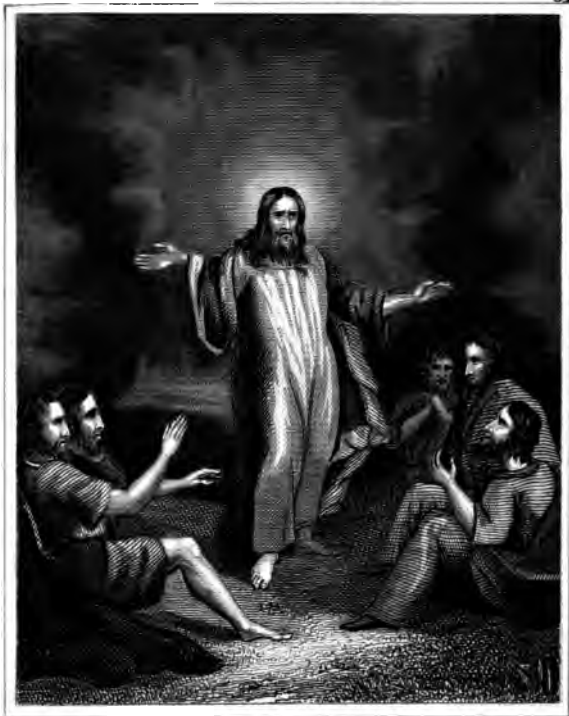
See here how carelessly they speak of the sin of Judas. It is folly for us to think that the sins of others are nothing to us, especially those sins we are any way accessory to, or partakers in. But the judgment of God is according to truth, not according to comparison.

This is an instance of the wretched end of those whom Satan beguiles, particularly such as are given up to the love of money ;

and we have an instance of the wrath of God revealed from heaven against the ungodliness and unrighteousness of men. "*The wages of sin is death ; but the gift of God is eternal life, through Jesus Christ our Lord.*" (Rom. vi. 23.)

Let us watch against the beginning of evil, and avoid covetousness, and earnestly pray, and endeavour to feel, when we say, Lord, "*lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil ; for thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen.*"





*Sorrows, begone, no longer we'll deplore,  
Our Lord is risen, and we must sigh no more.  
See him, on Tabor, his disciples meet,  
With doubtful trembling joy they kiss his feet.*

## CHRIST RISEN FROM THE DEAD.

What love, what awe, what majesty and grace !  
 Dazzling his form, ineffable his face ;—  
 Go then, for thus I your commission sign,  
 Disciple all the world, and make them mine.

*“THE angel said, He is risen. And go quickly, and tell his disciples, that he is risen from the dead, and, behold, he goeth before you into Galilee ; there shall ye see him ; lo, I have told you.” (Matthew. xxviii. 5, 7.)*

Our blessed LORD renewed his choice of the eleven as his apostles, and commissioned them to go into all the world to preach his Gospel to every creature : and he solemnly commanded his apostles to go forth among all nations. But they were still so much under the influence of Jewish prejudices, that they did not understand this as authorizing them to preach to the

Gentiles, till a considerable time after the descent of the Holy Ghost. The apostles, when first sent out, were forbidden to go into the way of the Gentiles, but now they were sent to all nations. Salvation by Christ is offered to all, and none excluded who do not, by their unbelief and impenitence, shut themselves out. The salvation they were to preach, is a common salvation; *whoever will, let him come* and take the benefit; there is no difference or respect of persons with Christ Jesus.

The general nature of baptism has been noticed (page 25); we have here that institution appropriated to the Christian dispensation. The apostles were commanded to *baptize in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost*. This is undeniable proof of the doctrine of the Trinity; *of the Godhead of the Son, and of the dis-*

distinct personality and Godhead of the Holy Ghost. To be baptized in their name, implies professed dependence on those Persons jointly and equally, and devoting ourselves to them. This cannot be accounted for on any other principle, than the mysterious unity of three coequal Persons in the unity of the Godhead.

Christianity is the religion of a sinner who applies for salvation from deserved wrath and from sin; he applies to the mercy of the Father, through the person and atonement of the incarnate Son, and by the influence of the Holy Spirit; and in consequence gives himself up to be the worshipper and servant of the triune Jehovah, in all his ordinances and commandments.

Baptism is an outward sign of that inward spiritual grace; a washing, or sancti-



fication of the Spirit, which seals and evidences the believer's justification. When our Lord had appointed this ordinance, and directed the apostles to teach their future converts to observe all things whatever he had commanded them, he said, *Lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the world.*

Let this lead us to turn the promise into a prayer for ourselves, and for every part of the church. Even so, Lord Jesus, be thou with us and all thy people; cause thy face to shine upon us; "*that thy way may be known upon earth, thy saving health among all nations. Let the people praise thee, O God; yea, let all the people praise thee.*" (Psalm lxxvii.)





*When the wealthier crowd had left the place,  
A needy widow, with dejected face,  
Offer'd her two poor mites, 'twas all her store,  
And blush'd, and inward sigh'd she had no more.*

## THE WIDOW AND HER TWO MITES.

Not unconcern'd did this our Saviour see,  
But prais'd the widow's generous poverty.  
The rest but their superfluous wealth had thrown,  
Nor would their coffers miss it when 'twas gone.

*"THERE came a certain poor widow, and she threw in two mites, which make a farthing." (Mark xii. 42.)*

Our Lord, when finally about to leave the temple, sat down over against the treasury, into which the people put money for defraying the expenses incurred for the services of the temple. He saw several rich persons giving large sums; at length a poor widow put in two mites, which make a farthing, and he declared that "*she had cast in more than all the rest.*" Their larger donations were only a part of their superfluities, and bore no proportion to their abundance; she cast in all her living,

having nothing left. All she had to depend upon was what she might earn by her labour, or receive as alms. Doubtless our Lord saw that she did not do this out of singularity, or in expectation of praise or reward, but in dependence on the Divine promises and providence.

From this humble offering, remember that what we rightly give for the relief of the poor, and the support of God's worship, is consecrated to God ; and our Saviour approves with pleasure whatever we have in our hearts to give to the relief of his poor members, or for his service. He sees every hand that is stretched out for such purposes. Pounds were little to the rich ; two mites were all to her. Christ judged of the offering by the intention of the giver, rather than by the amount of the gift. The *poorest* are able to perform works of kind-

ness, and can exercise charity according to their means. "*Blessed is he that considereth the poor and needy : the Lord shall deliver him in the time of trouble.*" (Psalm xli. 1.)

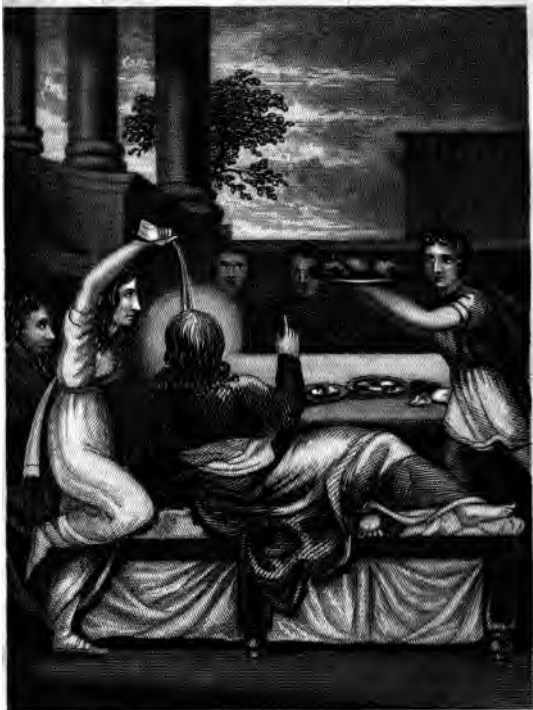
Let us also not forget that Jesus still sees how much, and from what motives, men contribute. He looks at the heart; he observes what principles they act upon, and what their views are in giving alms; and whether it is done unto the Lord, or only to be seen of men. He approves of liberality in the rich; they should apportion a part of their wealth more than they generally do, to works of piety and charity; but it should be done in simplicity. If objects of charity do not present themselves that require so much, they ought to inquire them out, and to devise liberal things. Nor should they be flattered that their gifts will atone for any ungodliness or personal

neglect of the cause of Christ. Neither should the poor be discouraged in their humble endeavours to show the sincerity of their love.

Many would have been ready to censure this poor widow, and to think she did ill ; why should she give to others, when she had little enough for herself? But our Saviour commends her ; therefore we are sure that she did that which was pleasing in his sight. Public charities should be encouraged,—they bring upon a nation public blessings ; and the feeble efforts of the poor to honour their Saviour, will be commended in that day when all the splendid actions of unbelievers will be unnoticed, or exposed to deserved contempt.







*A vial of purest nard Mary brought,  
That e'er for thrice its weight was bought,  
Which o'er his head she broke; the rich perfume  
Diffusing all Arabia round the room.*

## CHRIST ANOINTED AT BETHANY.

Whilst the good deeds this penitent has wrought,  
 Shall through the world be with my gospel taught;  
 As long as earth remains, or as the sun  
 Shall round the radiant belt his glorious circle run.

*“ AS he sat at meat, there came a woman having an alabaster box of ointment of spikenard, very precious; and she brake the box, and poured it on his head.”*  
 (Mark xiv. 3.)

The woman is supposed to have been Mary, the sister of Lazarus. She poured the ointment upon the head of Christ; this was accounted the highest respect. It may be looked upon as an act of faith in our Lord Jesus, the *Christ*, the *Messiah*, the *Anointed*: it signified that she believed in him as God's *Anointed*. Where there is true love in the heart to Jesus Christ, no-

thing will be thought too precious to bestow upon him.

The disciples said, "*To what purpose is this waste?*" This shows the want of tenderness towards this pious woman. We must learn to be cautious lest we become censorious of the zeal of others. What we may impute to want of prudence, God may accept as an instance of abundant love. We must not say, Those do too much in religion, that do more than we do; but rather let us endeavour to do as much as they. We must not think that any thing is wasted which is intended to honour Christ, or the time wasted that is spent in his service, or the money wasted which is laid out in any works of piety.

Christ reproved his disciples for troubling this good woman. Observe his reason; "*And Jesus said, Let her alone; why*

*trouble ye her? she has wrought a good work on me. For ye have the poor with you always, and whensoever ye will ye may do them good; but me ye have not always. She hath done what she could: she is come beforehand to anoint my body to the burying."* (ver. 6, 7, 8.)

Those who have a heart to do good, never need to complain for want of opportunity. We can never fail to find in this world some to whom Christ will have kindness shown as to himself. There are other opportunities of doing good, which come seldom; are short and uncertain; and which require peculiar diligence to improve whilst in our power.

The more Christ's servants and their services are reviled, the more he manifests his acceptance. This answer had a mystical meaning. "*She did it for my burial.*"

This was as it were the embalming of his body : because the doing of that after his death would be prevented by his resurrection, it was done before.

This act of faith and love was so remarkable, that the preachers of Christ crucified, and the inspired writers, could not but take notice of this passage ; and being once enrolled in the sacred records, it could never be forgotten. It would be reported as a memorial of Mary's faith and love to all future ages. This is a remarkable prophecy. Christ knew that he should influence the evangelists to record this event, which might appear trivial among the great actions of our blessed Lord's public life ; and the accomplishment of it has been equally remarkable.





*Scarcely had the sober morning's doubtful ray  
Beckon'd the sun and warr'd the shades away,  
When the two Marys met with pious care  
To anoint their Master in the sepulchre.*

## THE RESURRECTION OF CHRIST.

"I know your cares, dispel your causeless fear;  
Jesus you seek; he's risen, he is not here.  
This joyful news to his disciples bear;  
For Galilee he's gone, to meet them there."

"*MARY Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James, and Salome, had bought sweet spices, that they might come and anoint him. And very early in the morning they came unto the sepulchre at the rising of the sun.*" (Mark xvi. 1, 2.) The women who had attended Christ before his crucifixion, visited his sepulchre. On their arrival, an assurance was given them by an angel, that the Lord Jesus was risen from the dead. They entered into the sepulchre a little way, and saw that the body of Jesus was not where they left it.

The sight of the angel might justly have encouraged them, but they were affrighted.



The angel silences their fears by assuring them there was cause for triumph. As angels rejoice in the conversion of sinners, so they do also in the consolation of saints. "*Ye seek Jesus of Nazareth, which was crucified.*" (ver. 6.) The inquiries of believing souls after Christ, have a particular regard to him as their crucified Saviour. The angel speaks of Jesus as one that *was* crucified. The thing is past; ye must not dwell so much upon the sad circumstances of his crucifixion, as to be unapt to believe the joyful news of his resurrection. He *was* crucified, but he *is* glorified. "*He is risen, he is not here,*" not dead, but alive again; hereafter you will see him, but you may here see the place where he was laid.

They must tell the disciples that he is risen. Go quickly to them, tell them that *their Master* is risen; this will keep them

from despair. Christ is not ashamed to own his poor disciples, now he is in his exalted state.

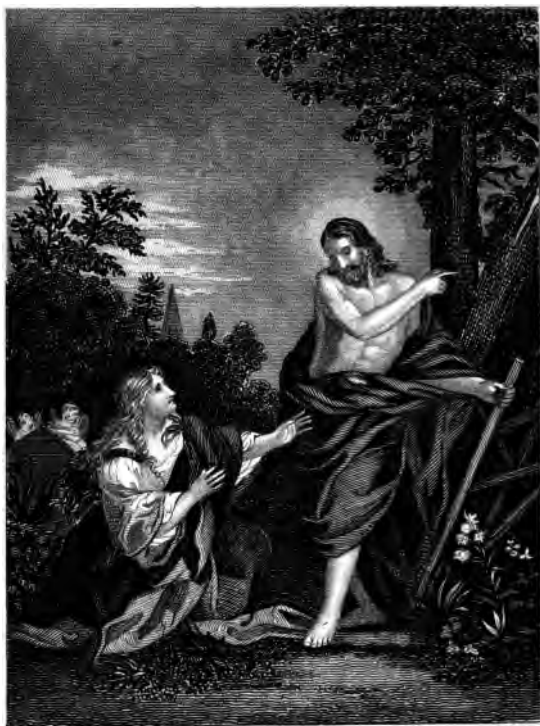
They must also tell Peter. He is particularly named ; *Tell Peter*, it will be most welcome to him ; for he is in sorrow for sin, and no tidings can be more welcome to true penitents than to hear of the resurrection of Christ, because he rose again for their justification. He will be afraid lest the joy of this good news do not belong to him ; therefore go to Peter by name.

The Lord Jesus appointed them all, and Peter by name, to meet him in Galilee. The meetings between Christ and his disciples are all of his own appointment. Christ will be sure to meet his people with the promised blessing, in every place where he records his name.

The women ran with all the haste they

could to the disciples. See how much we are enemies to ourselves and our own comforts, in not considering what Christ hath declared to us. Christ had often told them, that “*the third day he would rise again;*” had they given him due credit, they would have come to the sepulchre, expecting to have found him risen; and would have received the news of it with joy, and not with terror and amazement. Being ordered to tell the disciples, the women named nothing of it to any person they met, for they were afraid. Disquieting fears often hinder us from doing that service to Christ and to the souls of men, which, if a lively faith were strong in us, we might do with joy and gladness.





*She, Joseph's gardener him supposing, said,  
"O tell me, tell me, where my Lord you've laid"  
"Mary!" he said; the master's voice she knew,  
And at his glorious feet herself in transports threw.*

## CHRIST APPEARETH TO MARY.

Startling she turns, and, glimmering thro' the leaves,  
Something that seems of human form perceives,  
Which kindly ask'd her—why she wept, and whom  
She sought so near the solitary tomb?

*“ WHEN Jesus was risen, he appeared first to Mary Magdalene. And she went and told them that had been with him, as they mourned and wept. And they, when they heard that he was alive, and had been seen of her, believed not.” (Mark xvi. 9, 10, 11.)*

The fervency of Mary Magdalene's affection to the Lord Jesus is here shown. She staid at the sepulchre when Peter and John were gone. She wept at the remembrance of his bitter sufferings, and the loss which she and others sustained; and as she wept, she looked into the sepulchre, where she saw two angels in white, sitting. They

spoke to her, asking the cause of her sorrow. She seems, in her confusion, not to have discerned what they were. “ *Why weepest thou ?* ” I have cause enough to weep, said she, for “ *they have taken away my Lord.* ”

Before the angels gave Mary any answer, Christ satisfied her inquiries. Mary longs to see the dead body of Christ, and complains of the loss of that,—and behold, she sees him alive!

In this appearance of Christ to Mary, she knew not at first it was Jesus. He asked her, “ *Woman, why weepest thou ?* ” She did not give a direct answer, but supposing him to be the gardener, said, “ *Sir, if thou have carried him hence, tell me where thou hast laid him, and I will take him away.* ” Christ at length made himself known to her, and gave her proofs of his resurrection. *Jesus saith* unto her, “ *Mary.* ” It was said

with that kindness with which he was wont to speak to her. She was at once aware who it was; 'It is the voice of my Beloved.' She turned, and said, "*Rabboni? Is it my Master? Is it indeed? My Master, my great Master.*"

Mary, supposing that he was risen, as Lazarus was, to live among them as he had done, probably was about to take his hand or cling to his feet in her usual manner: this mistake Christ rectified; she must believe him, and adore him, as exalted. He forbids her to expect the continuance of his bodily presence; he was no more in the world; and therefore she must look higher, and look further, than the present state of things. He directs her not to tarry, and gives a message for his disciples. Though he was now entering upon his glory, yet he owns his disciples as his brethren.

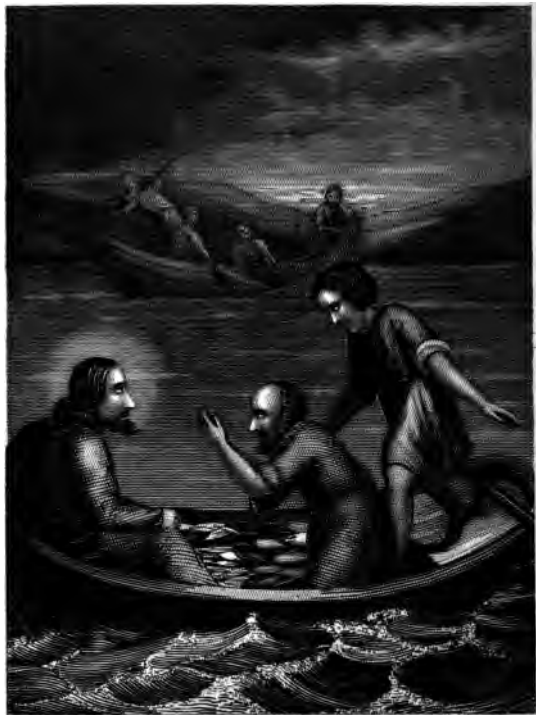


Though they had forsaken him and fled, yet he forgives.

This was Mary's reward for her constancy, and a rebuke to the apostles, who had not been so close in attending on the dying Jesus, nor so early as she was in meeting the risen Jesus.

Mary Magdalene then came and told the disciples that she had seen the Lord alive; he had spoken these things unto her, as a message to be delivered to them; and she delivered the message faithfully. Those who have the happiness, to enjoy the blessings of the grace of Jesus Christ themselves, will, on all suitable opportunities, most cheerfully communicate it, to the benefit of others.





*Astonish'd, Peter kneel'd, and thus began,  
Depart from me, for I'm a sinful man!  
"Fear not, but follow me, our Lord replies;  
Henceforth you men shall take, their souls a  
nobler prize."*

## THE DRAUGHT OF FISHES.

What can we hope, he says, but fruitless pain  
Where all the night we've toil'd, and toil'd in vain?  
Yet at thy word we'll try, and, as he spake  
They cast, and then a numerous draught they take.

*“ WHEN Simon Peter saw it, he fell down at Jesus' knees, saying, Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord. For he was astonished at the draught of the fishes which they had taken. And Jesus said unto Simon, Fear not, from henceforth thou shalt catch men.”* (Luke v. 8, 9, 10.)

Christ preached the gospel of the kingdom of heaven, that is, of grace and glory; and wherever he went he confirmed his Divine mission by a variety of miracles. The people pressed upon Jesus, to hear the word of God. And as he stood by the lake of Gennesaret, every one striving to get near him, he was crowded; so he went into

the ship that belonged to Simon. There he sat down, and taught the people his heavenly doctrine. These fishermen had some conversation with him before, at John's baptism, (John i. 40.) but now were called into more intimate fellowship with the Lord.

When Christ had done preaching, he ordered Peter to apply to the business of his calling. He commanded Peter and his crew to cast their nets into the sea, which they did, in obedience to him, though they had been hard at work all night, and had caught nothing.

The draught of fishes was miraculous. By this Christ showed his power and dominion in the seas, as well as on the dry land. He hereby gave a specimen of their success to those who were to be his ambassadors in the world. It greatly corro-

borates the evidence of Christ's miracles, that those best acquainted with them most admired them. And when Christ's works of wonder are works of grace to us, then especially they command our faith in his doctrine.

Peter, above all the rest, was so astonished, that he thought himself unworthy of the favour of Christ's presence in his boat. His acknowledgment was very just, and what it becomes us all to make : "*I am a sinful man, O Lord.*" Even the best men are sinful, and should be ready on all occasions to acknowledge it, and especially to Jesus Christ. Let us ask, to whom else but to Him who came into the world to save sinners, should sinful men apply ? Peter might well, in a sense of his own sinfulness, cry out on a sudden, "*Depart from me.*" We are all sinful, therefore Jesus

Christ might justly depart from us. But we must fall down and pray to him that he would *not* depart from us; for woe unto us, if he leave us—if the Saviour depart from the sinful man! Rather let us entreat him to come and dwell in our hearts by faith, that he may transform and cleanse our hearts from sin.

Christ took occasion from hence to intimate to Peter, and soon after to James and John, (Matt. iv. 21.) his purpose to make them his apostles. He said unto Simon, *Thou shalt both see and do greater things than these. Fear not.* By Peter's preaching, three thousand souls were in one day added to the church. Thus the type of this great draught of fishes was truly exemplified.







*Rich Simon did a splendid feast provide,  
Nor there his company our Lord denied;  
A woman heard, and, weeping, enter'd in,  
Whose vicious soul had long been stain'd with sin.*

## CHRIST ANOINTED BY A WOMAN.

False Judas straight with indignation cried,—  
 This waste might to the poor have been supplied.  
 "Blame not," our Lord rejoins, "her pious care,  
 Against my funeral she didst this prepare."

*"A WOMAN in the city which was a sinner, when she knew that Jesus sat at meat in the Pharisee's house, brought an alabaster box of ointment, and stood at his feet behind him, weeping, and began to wash his feet with tears, and did wipe them with the hairs of her head, and kissed his feet, and anointed them with the ointment." (Luke vii. 37, 38.)*

Observe the great respect a poor penitent sinner showed to Christ. A woman in the city, who was a sinner, having been converted from her wicked course of life by his preaching, came to acknowledge her obligation to him. She appears to have

heard Christ's instructions with great attention, and to have been thereby brought to a deep conviction of her guilt and danger, and to unfeigned repentance for her sins. She seems to have perceived him to be the promised Messiah, a spiritual Redeemer, the Saviour of sinners, and to have expected forgiveness and blessings from him. She wanted to hear more of his encouraging words, and to express her gratitude to him; she therefore followed him into the Pharisee's house. She washed his feet with her tears, and anointed his feet with ointment, owning him thereby to be the *Messiah, the Anointed*. She thereby showed strong affection to the Lord Jesus. Our Saviour took special notice that she loved much.

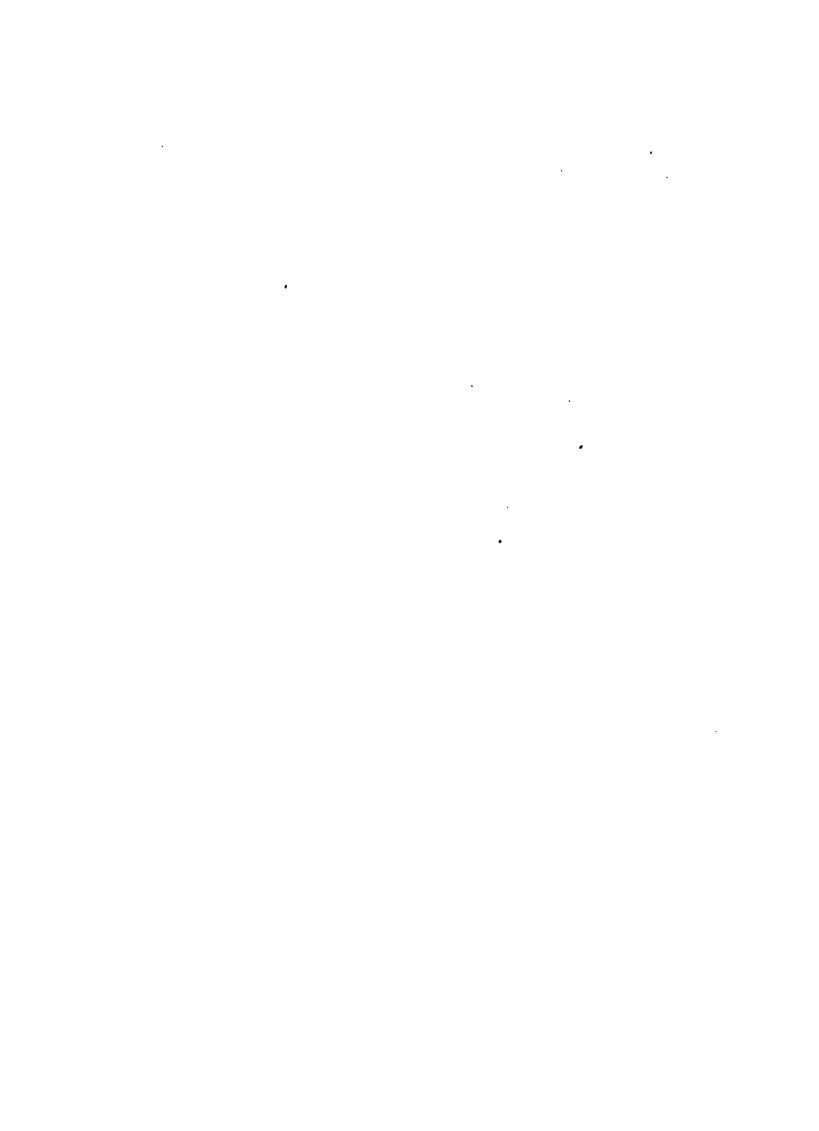
None can truly perceive how precious *Christ* is, and the glory of the gospel, ex-

cept the truly penitent. But while they feel they cannot sufficiently express self-abhorrence on account of sin, and admiration of his mercy, the self-righteous will be disgusted, because the gospel encourages only real repenting sinners.

The Pharisee, instead of rejoicing in these tokens of her repentance, confined his thoughts to her former bad character, and appeared to form an evil opinion of Jesus, because he allowed such a woman to approach him. Christ contrasted her conduct with that of the self-righteous Pharisee. He reasons thus: This woman has been a sinner, but she is a pardoned sinner, therefore a penitent sinner; what she did was an expression of her great love to her Saviour, by whom her sins were forgiven. The Pharisee doubted whether Christ was a prophet; but Christ shows that he was

*more than a prophet*, for he is one that has power on earth to forgive sins, and to whom are owing the affections of penitent, pardoned sinners. Without free forgiveness none of us can escape the wrath to come; this our gracious Saviour hath purchased with his blood, that he may freely bestow it on every one that believes in him.

Christ, by a parable caused Simon to acknowledge that the greater sinner this woman had been, the greater love she ought to show to Him when her sins were pardoned. Now we, being obliged to forgive, as we are, and hope to be forgiven, may from hence learn our duty; for be assured, those shall have judgment without mercy, who show no mercy to others.





*Now, with his twelve, the noisy town he leaves,  
And Martha them at Bethany receives;  
Solicitous her guest to entertain;  
While Mary did at Jesus' feet remain.*

## MARTHA ENTERTAINS CHRIST.

One thing is needful: O, let that be sure,  
 The way to bliss that ever shall endure:  
 But Mary doth with happier judgment choose;  
 Her's is the better part which she shall never loose.

MARTHA complained that her sister Mary neglected to assist her in providing for the company expected at her house.

*“And Jesus said unto her, Martha, Martha, thou art careful and troubled about many things; but one thing is needful: and Mary hath chosen that good part, which shall not be taken away from her.”*  
 (Luke x. 41, 42.)

Our Lord, as soon as he came into Martha's house, applied himself to his great work of preaching the gospel. Mary sat with great attention at his feet; but her sister was *cumbered about much serving*, when she should have been with her sister.



sitting at Christ's feet, to hear his word. Worldly business is a snare to us, when it hinders us from serving God, and getting good to our immortal souls.

What needless time is wasted, and expense often incurred, in the entertainment of friends, and even of ministers and professors of the gospel! Sometimes the persons employed for this, like Martha, lose their temper, break the Sabbath, and compel their servants and others to neglect the duties and privileges of religion. Martha, being angry at her sister, appealed to Christ.

Though Martha was on this occasion faulty, yet she was a true believer, and in her general conduct she did not neglect "*the one thing needful.*" We may therefore suppose that Christ's seasonable reproof had its proper effect. He reproved *her that she should think to please him*

with a splendid entertainment, and for perplexing herself to prepare it for him. It aggravated the sin and folly of her care, that but *one thing is needful*. This is certainly meant of what Mary made her choice—*sitting at Christ's feet*, to hear his word of salvation. Martha was *troubled about many things*, when she should have applied herself to one; godliness unites the heart, which the world had divided. Martha's work was good in the proper season and place; but now she had something to do unspeakably more needful, therefore it should be first attended to. The favour of God is the only thing absolutely needful to our final happiness; the salvation of Christ is absolutely needful to us sinners. Where this is attended to, all other things will be pursued in subservience to it.

Christ declared, "*Mary hath chosen*

*the good part.*" She had justly given the preference to that which best deserved it. "*For one thing is needful;*" this one thing that she has done, to give up herself to the guidance of Christ her Saviour.

What Mary then heard from those sacred lips, we hear still in the blessed gospel. That heavenly doctrine is ever the same, always new. It is not more subject to change than its great Author. The exercise of the gospel may be taken from us, but the benefit resulting from it is as inseparable from our souls as their very existence.





*A hundred sheep, of ponderous fleece and train,  
A shepherd fed on Dothan's fertile plain,  
Yet one, by hope of better pasture led,  
To distant barren deserts wandering fled.*

## THE LOST SHEEP AND THE SILVER.

Such joys in Heav'n receives each friendly mind,  
 (Not unconcern'd at cares of human kind)  
 When one poor sinner here, whose loss they mourn'd,  
 To virtue's shining paths, and to himself return'd.

*“WHAT man of you, having an hundred sheep, if he lose one of them, doth not leave the ninety and nine in the wilderness, and go after that which is lost, till he find it?”* (Luke xv. 4, 5.)

The parable of the lost sheep is very applicable to the great work of our redemption. The lost sheep represents the sinner as departed from God, and exposed to certain ruin if not brought back to him, yet not desirous to return. Christ is the Shepherd of his purchased flock, and counts them as his own. As a man would leave the rest of his flock in a safe state, and go to seek one lost sheep, so Christ is earnest

in bringing sinners to repentance. By his word and providence he seeks out the lost sinner; by his Spirit overcomes his unwillingness to return to God; by his power he delivers him from the bondage of sin and Satan, and carries him above the temptations of the world, bringing him back to the favour and service of God by repentance, faith, and true conversion. “*There is joy in heaven;*” the Lord himself rejoices, and all his holy angels rejoice with him, *over one sinner that repenteth; even more than over ninety and nine just persons who need no repentance.* (Ver. 7.) Angels are perfectly righteous, yet the repentance of a sinner, taken with its causes and its consequences, redounds more to the glory of God than their continuance in their holy state. Every believer in his turn has occasioned this joy in heaven; but it is the

cause of renewed joy when another and another is brought to repentance, even as a father rejoices more in the unexpected recovery of one son, who was given over for lost, than in the safety of all the rest, though he loves them with equal tenderness. Probably our Lord intended to warn the Pharisees that the publican's sorrow for sin, and cries for mercy, were far more acceptable than their long prayers and ostentatious devotions.

In the parable of the lost piece of silver, the loser is supposed to be a woman who has *ten pieces of silver*, and out of them loses *only one*. Let this keep up in us high thoughts of Divine goodness, that notwithstanding the sinfulness and misery of the world, there are numberless beings, for aught we know numberless worlds of beings, that never were lost, nor stepped aside from



the laws and ends of their creation ! That which is lost, is one piece of silver, comparatively but of small value. Yet the good woman *seeks diligently till she find it*. This represents the various means God makes use of, to bring lost souls home to himself. And here is also a great deal of joy for the finding of it.

True repentance implies a deliverance from eternal misery. We should endeavour to be assured that our repentance is unto salvation ; and we should be excited to labour, and earnestly pray for the conversion of others ; and if by our means only one be saved, it would overpay the labours of a whole life.





*A good old sire there was, whom age and cares  
Had bless'd with wealth, and crown'd with silver hairs :  
Two sons he had ; this, careful of the main ;  
The younger, wild, extravagant, and vain.*

## THE PRODIGAL SON.

Yet he the darling, which too well he knew,  
And only did his sports and mirth pursue,  
But tired at last with home, he longs for change,  
His follies now must have a larger range.

*“A CERTAIN man had two sons : and the younger of them said to his father, Father, give me the portion of goods that falleth to me. And he divided unto them his living. And not many days after, the younger son took his journey into a far country, and wasted his substance with riotous living.”* (Luke xv. 11, 12, 13.)

This parable represents God as the common Father of all mankind. God is the God not of the Jews only, but of the Gentiles (Rom. iii. 29); the same Lord over all, who is rich in mercy to all that call upon him. It represents the children of men as of different characters, though all

related to God, as their common Father. The younger son is the prodigal, whose character and case are here designed to represent that of a sinner; that of every one of us in our natural state, but of some more especially. Without any cause, he ungratefully and improperly demanded of his father the goods that fell to his share. Why did he desire to have his portion? He was weary of the good order and discipline of his father's family. Alas! such is the folly of many young men, who are religiously educated, and never think themselves their own masters, till they have broken God's bands in sunder, and, instead of them, have bound themselves with the cords of their own evil inclinations. This is the origin of the apostasy of sinners from God; they will not be bound by the rules of God's *government*, they will know no other good

and evil than what they themselves please. A shyness of God, and a willingness to disbelieve that he knows all things, are the ground of the wickedness of the wicked. This youth was proud of himself, and had a great conceit of his own sufficiency. More young people are ruined by pride than by any other evil propensity.

The father computed what he had to dispose of between his sons, and gave the younger son his share. The Almighty is a kind Father to all his children, and gives to them life and breath, and all things, even to the evil and unthankful. The condition of the prodigal represents to us a sinful state, that miserable state into which man is fallen.

A sinful state is a state of departure and distance from the living God. He took his journey from his father's house. Sinners

have fled from God. This world is the far country in which they take up their residence, and in the service and enjoyment of it they spend their all.

There he wasted his substance with riotous living. As to this world, they that live riotously, and waste what they have, will have a great deal to answer for. But this is to be applied spiritually; wilful sinners misemploy their thoughts and all the powers of their souls, mis-spend their time and all their opportunities; and the gifts of providence, which were to enable them to serve God, and to do good, are too often made the food and fuel to their own wickedness.







*His mind, an injur'd father's image brought,  
And, once dear home, a sadly pleasing thought!  
Hell thither strait if him his limbs will bear  
And perish if he must resolve to perish there.*

## THE PRODIGAL SON IN MISERY.

He fills the servile task, and waits the swine,  
 While they on envied husks and acorns dine,  
 When, lo! of heavenly light a cheerful ray  
 To his dark breast restor'd forgotten day.

*“He would fain have filled his belly with the husks that the swine did eat. And when he came to himself, he said, How many hired servants of my father’s have bread enough to spare, and I perish with hunger ! I will arise and go to my father and will say unto him, Father, I have sinned against Heaven, and before thee, and am no more worthy to be called thy son : make me as one of thy hired servants.”*  
 (Luke xv. 16, 17, 18, 19.)

When the prodigal had, by extravagant and riotous living, spent all his portion, and thereby had reduced himself to the greatest misery and want, he was brought to

the most degrading servitude. He was sent into the fields to feed swine, and he was so much in want of food to assuage his craving appetite, that he even partook of the husks that the swine did eat. It was in a far country that this young man was thus reduced to this forlorn state, and, as it were, dead to his father and family.

A sinful state is a state of death. A sinner is dead in trespasses and sins, destitute of spiritual life; no living to God, therefore dead. A sinful state is a lost state; “*This my son was lost.*” A sinful state is a state of madness and frenzy. This is intimated in that expression (ver. 17,) “*When he came to himself.*” Surely he was beside himself when he left his father’s house. The prodigal’s wretched state only faintly shadows forth the awful ruin of man by sin. But afflictions, when

sanctified by Divine grace, prove the happy means of turning sinners from the error of their ways. By them the heart is disposed to receive instruction; and they are sensible proofs of the vanity of the world and the evil of sin.

Having viewed the prodigal in his abject state of misery, we next shall consider his recovery from it. This begins by *his coming to himself*. He had been blind, both to his interest and his obligations; but by his afflictions he was brought to reflect on his own conduct. His first thought was of the plenty in which his father's servants lived, and which he might have enjoyed still, and more abundantly, but for his own sin and folly. Accordingly the prodigal resolved to "*arise and go to his father.*" He resolves to confess his fault and folly — "*I have sinned.*" Forasmuch as we

have all sinned, it behoves us to own that we have sinned, referring ourselves to the covenant of grace, which offers forgiveness to those that confess their sins. He would not extenuate the matter; “*I have sinned against Heaven, and before thee.*” Let those who are undutiful to their earthly parents, think of this; they sin against Heaven, and before God. The malignity of sin is against Heaven. It is committed in contempt of God’s all-seeing eye upon us. To regard God always as a Father, and our Father, will be of great use in our repentance and return to him.

*The prodigal’s return, see page 293.*





*A Lord there was whose steward prov'd unjust,  
His goods he wast'd and abus'd his trust;  
He bids him straight for his accounts prepare,  
What shall he do — perplex'd with anxious care.*

## THE UNJUST STEWARD.

Whither to go when him his lord disclaim'd ;  
 He cannot dig, and is to beg asham'd ?  
 At length, resolv'd, to take the wisest way,  
 And thus provides against a rainy day.

A CERTAIN rich man had a steward who had wasted his goods. *“ And he called him, and said unto him, How is it that I hear this of thee ? give an account of thy stewardship ; for thou mayest be no longer steward. Then the steward said within himself, What shall I do ? for my lord taketh away from me the stewardship : I cannot dig ; to beg I am ashamed.”* (Luke xvi. 2, 3.)

In this parable, all the children of men are represented as stewards of what they have in this world. We are only stewards ; for whatever we possess, it is the property of God ; we can have only the use of it, ac-



according to the directions of our great Lord, and for his honour. This unjust steward wasted his lord's property. We are all liable to the same charge; we have not made a proper improvement of what God has intrusted us with in this world, yet how few consider themselves in this light! His lord speaks as one sorry to be disappointed in him, and under a necessity of dismissing him. The steward cannot deny it, and therefore he must make up his accounts and be gone. This may teach us that death will come, and deprive us of the opportunities we now have of doing good; and that we must give an account to our Lord of our stewardship.

The steward began to consider: "*What shall I do?*" He cannot earn his bread by his labour. "*To beg I am ashamed.*" This was the language of his pride, as the

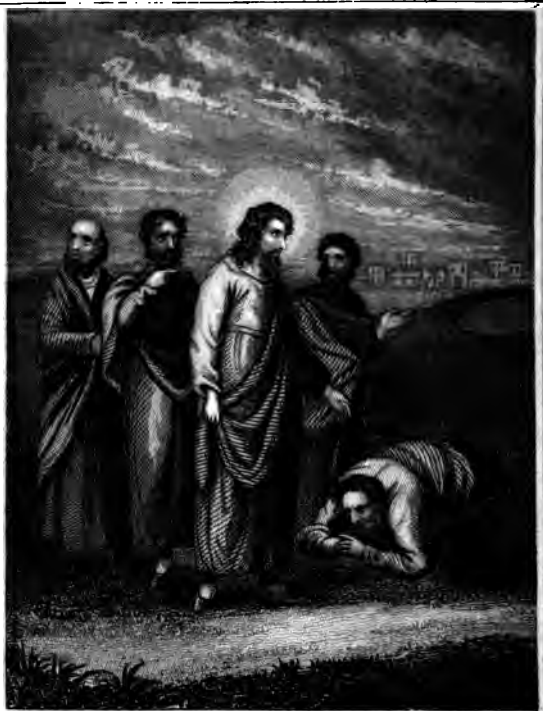
former of his slothfulness. He therefore determines to make friends of his lord's debtors, or tenants. "Now, I will so oblige them, that they will bid me welcome to their houses." He would make them his friends by striking off a considerable part of their debt to his lord. Observe here what uncertain things worldly possessions are. See what treachery is found even among those in whom trust is reposed!

When this was known, the lord referred to in this parable commended, not the iniquity, but the policy of the steward,—only meaning that it was a shrewd plan of providing against actual destitution. In that respect alone is it so noticed. Worldly men are more prudent in respect to their present interests, than the people of God are respecting their eternal concerns.

It would be well if the children of light

would learn wisdom from the men of the world; and having chosen their object, would pursue it as singly and constantly as worldly men do their comparatively worthless interests. In that case wealth would be a privilege, and prove a blessing to themselves and others. The right use of riches is evident of men's faith and love. Let us remember that the riches of this world are delusive and uncertain. And let us be convinced that those are truly rich who are rich in faith, and rich toward God, in Christ Jesus, in the promises, and in the assurances of Heaven; and therefore let us lay up our treasure in them, and in hope expect our portion from them. If the Lord be our God, let us decidedly serve and obey him, and devote all we have to his glory.





*One of the ten, who felt himself restor'd,  
Return'd immediate, and our Lord ador'd;  
Thy faith hath sav'd thee, I thy soul release.  
From all its sins and fears, and bid thee go in peace.*

## JESUS CLEANSETH TEN LEPERS.

Something of wonder thus our Lord exprest,—  
 Were not ten cleans'd, but where are all the rest?  
 Not one but this poor stranger glory gives  
 To God's great name from whom he health receives.

*“And one of them, when he saw that he was healed, turned back, and with a loud voice glorified God, and fell down on his face at his feet, giving him thanks; and he was a Samaritan.”* (Luke xvii. 15, 16.)

We have here an account of the cure of ten lepers. They stood afar off, as by the law their loathsome disease obliged them to do. They ask not in particular to be cured of their leprosy, but lifted up their voices, and said, *“Jesus, Master, have mercy on us”* (Ver. 13.) Jesus sent them to the priest, who was the judge of the leprosy. This was a trial of their obedience.

While the ceremonial law was yet in force

Christ took care that it should be observed; but, probably, he designed to have the priest's testimony to the perfectness of the cure. As they went they were cleansed, and so became fit to be looked upon by the priest. We may expect God to meet us with mercy, when we are found in the way of our duty. We must attend upon instituted ordinances, and pray, and read the Scriptures; and open our case to a faithful minister: and though the means will not heal us of ourselves, God will heal us in the diligent use of the means of grace.

One of them, and the only one out of ten, returned to give thanks. When he felt that he was healed, instead of going forward to the priest, to be by him discharged, which was all that the rest desired, he turned back towards the Author of his cure, whom he wished to have the glory, before he received

the benefit, Those who have received mercy from God should make it known to others, that they also may praise God, and may be encouraged by their example to put their trust in him. He made a particular address of thanks to Christ. It becomes us as Christians, to be very humble in our thanksgivings, as well as sincere in our prayers. Christ noticed the one who had thus distinguished himself from the rest, that he was a Samaritan. The Samaritans had not the pure knowledge and worship of God among them, as the Jews had; yet it was one of them who glorified God on this occasion.

Of the many that receive mercy from God, very few return to give thanks in sincerity of heart. When men's imprudence and vices bring sickness upon them, and the Lord in mercy restores their health, how few give glory to God as they ought to do, "*not only*



*with their lips, but in their lives !*’ The other nine had their cure, and it was not revoked, as justly it might have been, for their ingratitude; but this man had his cure fully confirmed by the blessed Jesus, who said unto him, “*Arise, go thy way ; thy faith hath made thee whole.*” (Ver. 19.) The others obtain the outward cure ; he alone got the inward spiritual blessing. Thus it is when a sinner is convinced of his guilt and pollution, when he experiences the comfort of pardon and forgiveness, and feels the power of the new-creating Spirit ; in his heart he will glorify God and thankfully adore his Saviour.





*"Tis granted," Jesus said, "receive thy sight;  
When straight his eyeballs feel the cheerful light;  
Our Lord, he follow'd, who had him restor'd,  
And he, and all that saw, prais'd, wonder'd, and ador'd*

## A BLIND MAN RESTORED.

He still persists, till him our Lord did hear;  
He bids them bring him, whom approaching near,  
He asks, what wilt thou? he again replies,  
Lord, since thou canst, restore me my dear eyes.

*“A BLIND man sat by the way-side begging; and hearing the multitude pass by, he asked what it meant. And they told him, that Jesus of Nazareth passed by. And he cried, saying, Jesus, thou Son of David, have mercy on me. Jesus said unto him, Receive thy sight: thy faith hath saved thee. And immediately he received his sight, and followed him, glorifying God; and all the people, when they saw it, gave praise unto God. (Luke xviii. 35, 36, 37, 38, 42, 43.)*

This poor man was not only blind, but destitute. He sat begging, and could not work for his living. Those ought to be re-

lieved by charity, whom the providence of God has disabled from getting their own bread by labour.

Hearing the noise of a multitude passing by, he asked what it meant. Those who want sight, should make the better use of their hearing; and when they cannot see with their own eyes, should crave the kind assistance of their friends who enjoy the blessing of sight. So this poor blind man did, and thus understood that Jesus of Nazareth was passing by.

His prayer was both in faith and fervency. He believes Christ to be Jesus a Saviour; he believes he is able to help and succour him, and earnestly begs his favour. Christ is a merciful King; those that apply to him as the Son of David, shall ever find him so. *“Thou Son of David, have mercy on me”* Those who are in earnest for Christ’s favours

and blessing, will not be put by from the pursuit of them, though they meet with opposition and rebuke. Christ encourages poor petitioners, and invites them to come to him, and is ever ready to bid them welcome. Though our Lord was upon his journey, yet he stopped, and commanded the man to be brought to him. By spreading our case before God, with a particular representation of our wants and burdens, we 'teach ourselves to value the mercy we are in need of.

The prayer of faith, guided by Christ's encouraging promises, and grounded on them, shall not be in vain. The fruits of Christ's favour are doubly comfortable, when we are saved by faith. The grace of Christ ought to be thankfully acknowledged, to the glory of God. Those whom he healed pleased him best when they

praised God, as those shall please God best who praise Christ, and do him honour; for in confessing that he is Lord, we give glory to God the Father. It is for the glory of God if we follow Christ, as those will do whose eyes are opened. The people that saw it, could not forbear giving praise to God, It behoves us, as Christians, to endeavour to praise Almighty God for his mercies vouchsafed to others, as well as to ourselves.

If we would rightly understand these things, we must come to Jesus, like the blind man, earnestly beseeching him to open our eyes, and show us more and more clearly the excellency of his precepts, and the value of his salvation.







*At Cana they a nuptial feast prepare,  
 Our Lord, his mother, and the twelve were there;  
 The Saviour now his miracles began,  
 Which shew'd his power and spake him more than*

## WATER TURNED INTO WINE.

The numerous guests exhaust their frugal store,  
 The servants go for wine, but find no more :  
 This the great mother saw, her care express'd,  
 And begg'd assistance of their heavenly guest.

*“Jesus saith unto them, Fill the water pots with water; and they filled them to the brim. And he saith unto them Draw out now, and bear unto the Governor of the feast.” (John ii. 7, 8.)*

On the third day after our Lord's return into Galilee, a marriage was solemnized at a small town called Cana. Mary, the mother of Jesus, seems to have been present as one related to the family; and Jesus was invited to the marriage feast, with the few disciples he had then with him. He was graciously pleased to accept the invitation, in order to honour God's institution, and to teach us to show due respect and attention

to our relations, and encourage us to live together in Christian love and unity.

It is very desirable, when there is a marriage, to enjoy Christ's spiritual, gracious sanction—to have the marriage blessed by him: the marriage is then honourable indeed. They that would have the Spirit and love of Christ with them at their marriage, must invite him by earnest and humble prayer, and he will bless them.

At the entertainment they wanted wine; there was even want at a feast; though much was provided, yet there was a deficiency of wine. His mother solicited him to help them when the wine began to fail, as related in ver. 3; but his hour was not yet come till it was all used, and there was a total want; probably not only to prevent any suspicion of mixing some wine with the water, but to teach us that man's extremity

is God's opportunity to appear for the help and relief of his people. Mary kept her hope of Christ's compliance, that he would grant her desire,

Christ at length miraculously supplied them. The miracle was that of turning water into wine; the substance of water acquiring a new form, and having all the appearance and qualities of wine. Extracting the juice of the grape every year from the moisture of the earth, is no less a work of power; though, being according to the common course of nature, it is not such a work of wonder as this.

When the governor or ruler of the feast had found this fresh supply so excellent, he *“called the bridegroom, and saith unto him, Every man at the beginning doth set forth good wine, and when men have well drunk, then that which is worse: but*

*thou hast kept the good wine until now."*  
(ver. 10.)

The beginning of Moses' miracles was turning water into blood (Exod. iv. 9; vii. 20); the beginning of Christ's miracles was turning water into wine; which may remind us of the difference between the law of Moses and the gospel of Christ. The curse of the law turns water into blood; the blessing of the gospel turns water into wine. Christ hereby showed his power, and his desire to improve the comforts of all true believers. Let us pray God to grant us the grace of his Holy Spirit, that we walk in his ways with comfort and delight, as His obedient and dutiful children, all our days.



sooner wrought, the nobleman's mistake rectified, and his faith confirmed. When he denies what we ask, he gives what is much more to our advantage; we ask for ease, he gives patience. Christ's saying, *Thy soul lives, makes it alive.* Of his pity; the nobleman's natural affection discovered itself in his words, "*Ere my child, my dear child, die;*" therefore Christ dropped the reproof and gave assurance of the recovery of his child. He knows how a father pities his own children.

The nobleman was satisfied. How quickly is that which is wanting in our faith perfected by the word and power of Jesus Christ! Christ said, "*Thy son liveth,*" and the nobleman believed him; like the father of the faithful, against hope he believed in hope, and staggered not through unbelief. Christ said, "*Go thy way;*" and, as an









*'Twas now the eve of the great paschal day;  
Our Lord, who knew the price he was to pay  
For man's misdeeds, his garments laid away  
And not disdains to wash their feet that day.*

## JESUS WASHES HIS DISCIPLES' FEET.

You me, your Lord and Master justly name;  
If I then wash your feet, do ye the same,  
Their Master's fate his servants should content;  
Greater is he that sends, than he that's sent.

*“Ye call me MASTER and LORD; and ye say well, for so I am. If I then have washed your feet, ye also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you.”* (John xiii. 13, 14, 15.)

Christ condescended to wash his disciples' feet, that he might give a proof of the great love wherewith he loved them to the end. He knew that his hour was come, which he had long expected, when he should depart out of this world to the Father. Christ washed his disciples' feet that he might signify to them spiritual washing.

The same love which induced Christ to ransom and reconcile his disciples, when enemies, still influences him; and what mercy is too great to be expected from Him who came down from Heaven, and not only washed his disciples' feet, but shed his own precious blood, that he might open a fountain in which to wash our souls from sin and all uncleanness? Shall we then refuse to submit to his divine authority, and not improve the means of grace which he hath been pleased to bestow upon us!

Let us ever bear in mind what Christ himself hath declared—“*Every one that exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted.*” (Luke xviii. 14.)





*When this they heard, a deep concern they felt,  
Their hearts with inward true compunction melt:  
What shall they do to avert the threaten'd doom,  
Atone just Heaven, and shun the wrath to come?*

## MULTITUDES CONVERTED

The apostles thus—"Believe, repent, obey!  
And wash in sacred streams your sins away;  
None are excluded from the proffer'd grace,  
It reaches all of Abraham's faithful race."

THIS discourse, though the first that St. Peter ever made in public, deeply affected the people, so that *"they were pricked in their hearts, and said unto Peter, and to the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren what shall we do? Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. For the promise is unto you and your children,"* &c. (Acts ii. 37, 38, 39.) The apostle's argument was very pointed; but when we consider the obstinate unbelief of the Jews, neither Peter's words, nor the miracles they wit-

## THE WIDOW'S SON RAISED.

The widow wails in accents wild,  
 Now stretch'd in death her only child ;  
 Where shall she turn? absorb'd in grief  
 She comes and prays of Christ relief.

THE next miracle that demands our notice, and which must surely satisfy us that while our Saviour appeared as man, yet he was "*The mighty God,*" is the raising the widow's son at Nain. The narrative, as related in Luke vii., is very affecting ; and is as follows: "*And it came to pass the day after, that he went into a city called Nain, and many of his disciples went with him, and much people. Now when he came nigh to the gate of the city, behold, there was a dead man carried out, the only son of his mother, and she was a widow ; and much people of the city was with her. And when the Lord saw her, he had compassion*



*on her, and said unto her, Weep not : and he came and touched the bier, and said, Young man, I say unto thee, Arise : and he that was dead sat up, and began to speak ; and he delivered him to his mother."*

What must have been the feelings of the aged widow, when she beheld her beloved son, the prop of her age, and the darling of her heart, thus snatched as it were from the silent grave? and how must her heart swell with gratitude to God, for his mercies so signally bestowed.

It was a young man that Christ raised to life. The young die as well as the aged, and this should lead us to apply our hearts to wisdom, while the days of youth last, for we know not how soon we may be called to the silent tomb. What made this case the more distressing was, that his mother was a widow, and this was her only son, perhaps

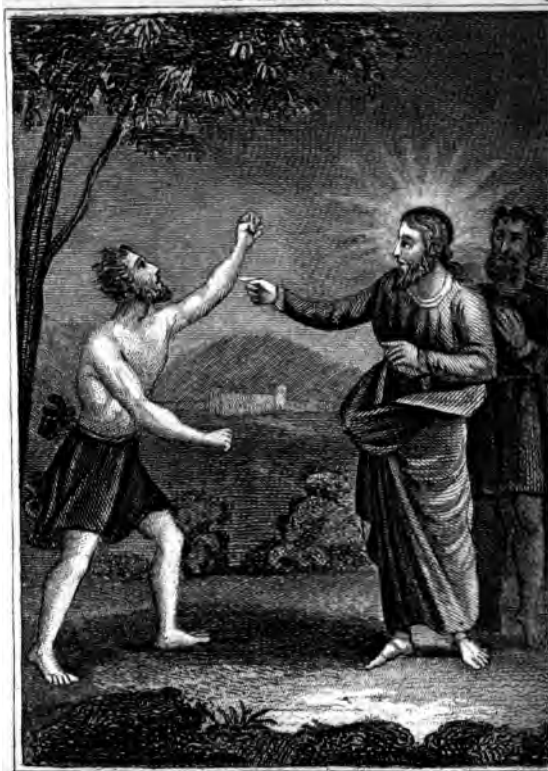
her only child ; the comfort of her declining years, on whom she depended for support and protection. How truly sorrowful was her condition ! but the blessed Saviour knew her circumstances, and suited his mercy to her necessity. He is a present help in trouble ! Jesus is a friend at all times, and happy are they who repose their all in his hands. He came just at the moment this young man was being carried to the grave ; shall we say it was by chance ? No ; God does every thing by an all-wise arrangement, making his act of kindness to accord with our necessities.

Christ raised the young man, and here in displayed his power ; *for he is God over all* ; and he also showed his tender mercy, and has left us an example to relieve as much as possible the distresses of others ; and if we should make any distinction among the

subjects of sorrow, we may follow his conduct, and be especially kind to the widow ; for none need our commiseration and attention more than the bereaved female.

Here the Saviour showed his power over death, by delivering one from his hands. Since then he has conquered death, by rising from the grave by his omnipotent power ; and there is a day coming when he will bid all the dead arise and come to judgment. O that it may be our lot then to be raised to everlasting happiness.





*Lo! in this forlorn condition,  
When he came to set me free;  
I replied to my Physician,  
What have I to do with thee?*

**THE EVIL SPIRITS CAST OUT.**

Lo! the poor maniac, possess'd,  
By evil spirits and sore distress'd !  
The spirits impell'd by voice divine,  
They pass into a herd of swine.

WE have already contemplated the power that Christ exercised over disease ; he could remove it at pleasure ; and we have also beheld death itself surrendering its prey to him. Here we see him exercising his authority over the powers of darkness, and making the devil to flee before him.

It appears there was a man possessed with an unclean spirit, who lived among the tombs, whom no one could bind ; for though he had been often bound, yet he broke the chains, and was continually crying and cutting himself with stones. (See Matt. viii. and Luke viii.) What a lamentable state for a poor creature to be

in! The devil had got possession of his body and mind, and made him truly wretched.

In our days Satan does not seem to be often allowed to exercise such power over the bodies of men ; but alas ! he has entire control in the will and affections of very many ; there he reigns with a powerful sway, and leads his unhappy subjects captive at his will ; plunging them into every wretchedness, and but for divine grace will plunge them into eternal woe. Well does it become us daily to cry for grace to withstand the wiles of Satan, and that we may be kept from his power.

When Jesus saw this poor object of misery, he bade the evil spirits come out, and they obeyed, for they could not withstand the command of the Son of God. *This* wretched man had often been bound

by his fellow-creatures, but their cords could not hold him: it was reserved for Jesus to accomplish the wonderful deliverance. And thus it is in spiritual things; human laws may restrain a man and keep him for a while in due bounds, but when fierce temptations come, all human restraint is at an end; it is Jesus, by his divine grace, who alone can bind the soul, and this he does with the chains of love.

The devils besought Jesus not to send them out of the country, but to allow them to enter into a herd of swine, which he permitted, when the swine, about two thousand in number, ran down a steep place into the sea and were drowned. This so offended the people of the place where the miracle was wrought, that they besought Jesus to depart out of their coasts. Thus blind were they to the value of Christ and



his salvation, and prized the perishing things of this life more than the blessed Redeemer.

O let not this be your case, lest you lament your folly when it is too late. But what became of the man who was delivered from the devil's control? He came to Jesus and besought permission to be with him; but Christ desired him to go and tell what great things had been done for him, and what compassion had been shown to him. This is what the Saviour expects of his redeemed people, to glorify him and his salvation; and this is but little to do for him who has rescued us from so much misery in time, and from the wrath to come.





*Weep not, he cried; then touch'd the dead;  
The bier stood still; and loud he said,  
Young Man, I say to thee, Arise!  
He then on Jesus fix'd his eyes.*

## THE RULER'S DAUGHTER.

"O thou of power," the Ruler said,  
"The sick to heal and raise the dead,  
Thy word of renovation deign,  
My daughter then shall live again."

THE ninth chapter of the Gospel of Saint Matthew presents us with further instances of Christ's power in the miracles it contains, all of which were additional proofs, if further proofs were wanting, that he was the Son of God, and so many additional evidences that his mission was from Heaven ; leaving those inexcusable, who, after so many convincing facts, could deny he was the true Messiah promised in the Old Testament.

A man sick of the palsy, lying on a bed, was brought to him, and in this instance he spoke differently to what he did before ; not immediately healing the sufferer, but addressing him thus : "*Son, be of good cheer, thy*

*sins are forgiven thee."* What a word was this! A healthy body is a blessing; but O, how much more to be desired and preyed for is a pardoned soul! and here it was given without being asked for: may it prove an encouragement to us to implore a like blessing from the Saviour of sinners.

This language of Christ was considered by the Scribes who heard it as blasphemy; but they were soon made to see that he who spoke could forgive sins, for he bid the poor paralytic take up his bed and walk; and surely he who could do this by a word, could forgive his sins.

After this "*a ruler came and worshipped him, saying, My daughter is even now dead; but come and lay thy hand upon her, and she shall live.*" (See Mark v. and Luke viii.) St. Luke says, this child was only twelve years of age; a very serious warning

to the young, to think betimes on death, for none are too young to be called away; O, then pray earnestly to God to make you wise to salvation in early life, that when you die, you may be admitted to glory.

As Christ was going to the ruler's house to raise his daughter, a poor afflicted suffering woman came behind him and touched the hem of his garment, for she had faith to believe that if she could but touch his garment, she should be healed of an issue of blood, which had been wasting her constitution for many years; and it was according as she wished, for she was made whole, and received an encouraging word from Christ, who approved of her faith.

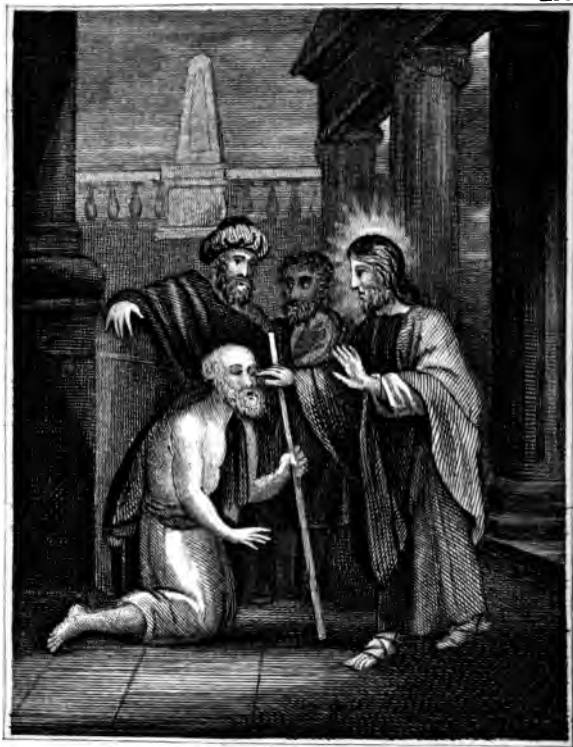
See what faith can do, as illustrated in the case of this woman! It led the afflicted in body to Christ, when he was on the earth, and now it leads the afflicted in soul

to him, with a happy assurance that he can heal every spiritual disease.

When Jesus arrived at the ruler's house, he said, The maid is not dead, but sleepeth. Upon hearing this, some unbelievers who were present laughed him to scorn; but their unbecoming conduct did not move the compassionate Saviour from his purpose, for he took her by the hand and raised her up; thus proving that he can as easily raise from death as from sleep, which he might therefore well call sleep. Happy are they whom he raises from a death of sin to a life of righteousness, and he will ultimately raise them to a life of glory.







*To Nazareth, then, proceeds the Lord;  
And was, by two blind men, implor'd  
To give them sight: their suit he hear'd,  
And to their view the plains appear'd.*

## TWO BLIND MEN RESTORED.

"Thy healing power upon us light;  
O, Son of God, restore our sight!"  
Companioned erst, the two, in woe,  
Companioned now, heaven's grace they know.

WHEN Jesus was returning from raising the ruler's daughter, two blind men followed him, crying, "*Thou Son of David, have mercy on us.*" (Matthew chap. ix. 27.) Though these men had not the happy privilege of beholding, with their natural eyes, the wonderful miracles of Christ, yet it is evident they had heard of him, and being blessed with faith in him, as the promised Son of David, they were led to cry to him for the gift of sight.

We cannot be sufficiently thankful to God for the use of all our members and faculties; it is to his gracious providence we are indebted for them, and to his glory we should study to use them.

It appears that our Saviour, not immediately attending to these beggars, they followed him into the house; not that he ever disregarded the application of any one, but he very often tried the faith of those who came to him, to see if they would still follow, though not noticed; and it stands upon record for our imitation, to persevere in prayer, though the Lord for a while delay to answer, for in his own time he will speak, as we find he did to these importunate men.

When he found they had faith in him, he healed them; and thus has he encouraged us to come with our natural blindness, even our spiritual darkness, to him, and he will cause the light of divine grace to shine into our hearts, to conduct us in the way everlasting.

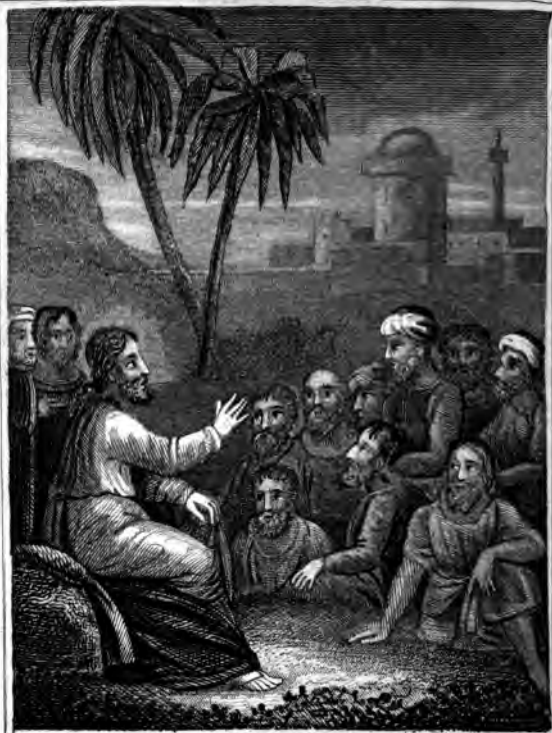
In the 20th chapter of St. Matthew we

read of another instance of our Saviour's giving sight to two blind men who were sitting by the way-side begging ; and hearing that he passed by, they cried after him for sight, and when rebuked by the multitude, and bid to hold their peace, they only cried the more, "*Have mercy on us, O Lord, thou Son of David.*" To their ardent entreaties Jesus paid kind attention, and they received their sight. (See Mark chap. x. and Luke chap. viii.) May we imitate them, though the world and Satan oppose us ; may we have grace to persevere, being determined not to rest satisfied with any thing short of saving light and grace.

In the ninth chapter of the Gospel of St. John, we have a very interesting account of a man, blind from his birth, who received the blessing of sight from Christ.

which gave rise to much conference among the Pharisees, who, instead of admiring this amazing instance of divine power, and the tender compassion of the Saviour, opposed him as much as possible, calling in question his character, because he healed this man on the Sabbath-day; and having examined the man on whom the miracle was wrought, and perceiving that he was determined to speak well of his glorious Physician, they cast him out, either from their presence in a rage, or from the synagogue; but Jesus having heard that the man was cast out, found him, made himself known to him, and was worshipped by him as his Lord and Saviour.





*Go, preach my Gospel, (saith the Lord,)  
Bid the whole Earth my grace receive;  
He shall be sav'd that trusts my word,  
He shall be lost that won't believe.*

## THE TWELVE DISCIPLES CHOSEN.

E'er long to spread his precepts bland,  
And preach salvation o'er the land !  
The chosen twelve, the Saviour calls,  
Whose minds no foretold ills appals.

IN the tenth chapter of St. Matthew we read the names and qualities of the twelve disciples whom our Saviour chose to attend him in his ministry, that seeing his miracles and hearing the doctrines he preached, they might be qualified to serve the church of God, when Christ should be taken out of the world.

The names of these chosen servants and followers of the Saviour of the world, were Simon Peter, Andrew, James the son of Zebedee, John, Philip, Bartholomew, Thomas, Matthew, James the son of Alphaeus, Thaddeus, Simon the Canaanite, and Judas Iscariot. (Luke, chap. vi.) To



these he gave power against unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal all manner of sickness and disease. He also commanded them to turn their attention to the lost sheep of the house of Israel, that is, to the Jews.

How great must have been the Saviour's power, to make such poor illiterate men fit for the high office of ministers of the everlasting gospel! For those he had now chosen were men of humble birth, and of mean occupation, some of them being fishermen; but God is pleased to work by feeble instruments, that he may pour contempt upon the pride and fancied greatness of human attainments, and bring all the glory to himself, to whom alone it is due. How great also was Christ's compassion, to send his disciples so especially to the Jews, the once highly favoured people of God, but who

had sadly revolted from him; and though furnished with the prophecies, which foretold the Saviour's coming, and now favoured with innumerable instances of his being amongst them, yet they despised and opposed him.

In addition to the power with which he invested these twelve disciples, he taught them what to preach, and how to prosecute their work; at the same time pointing out how awful would be the punishment of those who disregarded the message of salvation which they should preach.

He tells them they must expect persecution, for as he, their Master, was hated, so they must calculate upon it; for it is as much as the servant can expect to be as his master; but at the same time he encourages them with the assurance of God's kind attention to their sufferings; for he

who suffers not a sparrow to fall to the ground without his knowledge, will take care of his persecuted disciples, either by delivering them out of their enemies' hands, or by taking them home to heaven beyond the reach of cruel foes. With what gratitude ought we to acknowledge the goodness of God; that though at first he sent his gospel to the Jews, yet he has since caused it to be preached to us, who were part of the excluded Gentiles. May he give us grace highly to prize the inestimable blessing, and not slight it, or awful indeed will be his judgments upon us at last; for to those on whom the light of the blessed gospel has been so abundantly bestowed, there will be no excuse for neglecting its precepts.







